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ABSTRACT

This document consists of 11 issues of a workplace and job-skills information newsletter specifically designed for adult education program practitioners and their students. The issues are preceded by a final report on the project. The purposes of the newsletter were to disseminate "hands-on" career and job development information of importance to potential and existing workers enrolled in adult basic and literacy education programs, to present vehicles for business and education partnerships that would deal with worker education and training initiatives, and to attract exemplary resource materials and persons that contribute to the education and reeducation of adults seeking employment, promotion or employment security. Subject areas that were covered in the 11 issues of PASSAGE included: training and educational trends; educational options and opportunities for adults; labor market projections; workplace literacy projects; employment/training success stories; inservice techniques; workplace/career terms and definitions; job/career/educational expectations; workplace and job skills resources; highlighting careers; self-directed student lesson plans; study habits and basic skills upgrading; problem-solving and group decision-making exercises; and academic skills used on the job. (YLB)

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PASSAGE

"Your workplace and job skills information newsletter"

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ABSTRACT

PASSAGE, "Your workplace and job skills information newsletter," was developed for the following purposes: a) to disseminate "hands on" career and job development information of importance to potential and existing workers who are enrolled in adult basic and literacy education programs throughout the Commonwealth, b) to present vehicles for business and education partnerships that would deal with worker education and training initiatives, and c) to attract exemplary resource materials and persons that contribute to the education and reeducation of adults seeking gainful employment, opportunities for promotion, or employment security.

The 1989-1990 newsletter PASSAGE complemented materials provided in the *What's the Buzz* and other Pennsylvania Department of Education publications by concentrating on workplace and job skills information topics not specifically addressed in these works.

PASSAGE was a companion publication that linked academic preparedness with career development and employability issues.

Through exchanges of workplace and job skills information among labor-management groups, professional educators, literacy volunteers, training and development organizations, and adult education programs, PASSAGE encouraged networking and sharing resources. PASSAGE introduced individuals, programs, and ideas to adult basic and literacy education practitioners engaged in the vocational needs of their students.

PASSAGE proved to be a versatile publication as documented in feedback provided by its readership. For example, PASSAGE's training and employment feature articles were often duplicated by adult education instructors and used for classroom discussions. The "how to" articles and STUDENTaccesspages were ready-made lesson plans which instructors and volunteer tutors integrated into existing academic curriculums. Adult learners, within counseling settings, were motivated by the success stories of others who had overcome economic and educational barriers to find vocational training and employment opportunities.

PASSAGE was written for adult students, professional educators, volunteer tutors, labor-management groups, and others wishing to increase or share their knowledge of workplace and job skills issues. PASSAGE's overall strategy was to report information and resources that can be validated: a) through the successful track records of numerous adult education and training programs and b) through the first-hand experiences of adult learners and educators who can serve as exemplary role models.

INTRODUCTION

The Pennsylvania Department of Education chose The Midland Center, Inc.'s PASSAGE newsletter as a 1989-1990 special demonstration project because of the newsletter's mission to bring relevant workplace, job skills, and career-development information to adult educators and their students throughout the Commonwealth. PASSAGE's subject material was to have statewide appeal and application; therefore, the newsletter developed its editorial assignments and focus accordingly.

The Midland Center, Inc., a private training and development corporation since 1983, pioneered job search and vocational training programs which emphasized academic readiness for new and expanding workplace responsibilities. Dislocated workers competing for job opportunities recognized the value of The Midland Center, Inc.'s academic brush-up courses, high school certification (GED) programs, specialty workshops (i.e., preemployment testing practices), and vocational guidance programs. The Midland Center, Inc.'s emphasis on the relationship between academic preparedness and job/career opportunities provided the experience and inspiration for the PASSAGE newsletter.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education, actively involved in workplace literacy initiatives, selected PASSAGE as a vehicle for expanding its existing information network for adult education practitioners. To accomplish the time frames for publication, The Midland Center, Inc. was contracted to produce ten (10) issues of PASSAGE at a length of six (6) pages or longer and to disseminate the newsletter to twenty-two hundred (2200) readers.

The Midland Center, Inc. designed monthly editorial assignments which fulfilled the specific objectives outlined in the 353 special demonstration project proposal. The monthly editorial assignments solicited training and employment features, side bar resource listings/supplemental information, "how-to articles", technical pieces, curriculum guides (STUDENTaccesspages), and human interest stories.

The following was the schedule of activities that led to the timely development and delivery of PASSAGE, your workplace and job skills information newsletter:

- **Week 1**- Editorial Assignments (60 days before newsletter goes to the printer)
- **Week 2**- Research and Development (46 days before newsletter goes to the printer)
- **Week 3**- Editorial Review Process (revisions and concerns)
- **Week 4**- Desktop Publishing/Design Stage (39 days before newsletter goes to printer)
- **Week 4**- Final Proof/Camera Ready Stage (selection of photographs and appropriate graphics/artwork)

PASSAGE was delivered to the printer by the 15th of each month and was mailed to its readership on, or before, the last day of the month. The first issue of PASSAGE premiered in October 1989 and was

published monthly thereafter until June 1990 when two editions were completed to fulfill The Midland Center, Inc.'s commitment to ten publications.

Key personnel for the newsletter project included PASSAGE editors John Goberish, Communications Officer, Edward Thoma, Manager of Computer Communications, and Bernadette Mangie, Director of Education and Support Programs. Other employees of, and volunteers for, The Midland Center, Inc. provided technical support for the design and production phases of the newsletter. Alice Green, Executive Assistant, proofread issues for errors in punctuation, grammar, spelling, and word usage. Joe Jonas, Public Relations Specialist for the Volunteers In Service To America Literacy Corps, provided artistic input. Stan Ledzinski, Director of The Midland Center, Inc., monitored all newsletter activities including fiscal expenditures. Additional Literacy Corps members guided by VISTA Volunteer Frankie Lacey organized the newsletter for bulk mailing.

Copies of this report are available through:

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333 Market Street
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Educators, business personnel, the employed and unemployed, program and economic developers, and literacy sponsors can find subject material in PASSAGE of importance to their organization and/or self-development. PASSAGE was designed to create a dialogue among these groups who have shared interests in workplace literacy initiatives.

The Midland Center, Inc. wishes to thank the Pennsylvania Department of Education, namely Dr. John Christopher and Mr. Dan Partin, for their guidance throughout the 1989-1990 project year. In addition, The Center recognizes the overwhelming support PASSAGE received from the Beaver County Area Labor Management Committee, the United Steelworkers of America Local 1212, and LTV Steel Corporation. Historically, these organizations have taken an active role and interest in The Midland Center, Inc.'s educational programs and special projects such as PASSAGE which further training and employment opportunities for area residents.

THE PROBLEM

Although a wealth of employment and educational resources are commercially available or free to adult education program practitioners and their students, The Midland Center, Inc. proposed the need for a workplace and job-skills information newsletter specifically designed for the aforementioned audiences. The proposed newsletter PASSAGE was to introduce or to reintroduce workplace and job-skills information a) at a reading and interest level which does not impede or intimidate adult learners and b) to research and present this information in a timely manner given the socioeconomic and educational barriers facing many adult learners.

The Midland Center, Inc. saw a definite need for a newsletter that can organize existing resources, present new concepts, and highlight exemplary ideas/projects/individuals that affect how education and business communities prepare workers for tomorrow's training and employment opportunities. Therefore, PASSAGE was commissioned to expand the workplace and job-skills information network among Pennsylvania's educational programs and institutions, employers, skilled professionals, and students. Most importantly, PASSAGE was to have a special personality and tone which attract reader support and input.

In summary, PASSAGE was successful in reaching adult education practitioners who had need of a publication which a) was written for adult learners and b) disseminated workplace, job skills, and career-development information. The Midland Center, Inc. researched other workplace and job skill information publications and found that these publications often lacked the direction, sensitivity, and utility of PASSAGE.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Midland Center, Inc. established ambitious goals and specific objectives for the 1989-1990 PASSAGE Newsletter Special Demonstration Project. The following information summarizes the overall guidelines for PASSAGE as well as the benchmarks that were monitored throughout the newsletter's design, development, and dissemination stages. A tremendous amount of enthusiasm, thought, determination, hard work, and time was necessary to assure PASSAGE's success.

Established Goal Statements (A through C)

A. **The newsletter had to be innovative.** Innovation would include, but not be limited to, an attractive design, appropriate readability levels, high-interest topics, guest writers, and reader sensitivity (e.g., welcoming tone and acceptable humor). The editors' mission was to have a newsletter with outstanding content, visual appeal, and personality.

B. **The newsletter had to be timely.** With worker dislocation problems and workplace literacy concerns, PASSAGE needed to research and highlight noteworthy materials that could be shared with its readership in a timely manner; for example, PASSAGE chose topics such as how adult learners can use the power of positive thinking, where handicapped workers can find on-the-job training and employment assistance, and what adult learners can discover about their aptitudes, interests, and skills.

C. **The newsletter had to have utility.** The editors of PASSAGE felt that the material in the newsletter should be useful to education/business professionals, community volunteers, adult learners, and others fitting any combination of the above descriptions. Therefore, the materials selected would help build vocational curriculums, create discussion, and offer concepts and ideas which were replicable in a variety of training and employment situations.

Targeted Objectives (1 through 7)

1. **The newsletter would feature success stories.** Adult learners reading PASSAGE would relate to individuals who were of similar backgrounds, experiences, and age groups; the success stories would emphasize individuals who had completed adult basic education programs, pursued skills training, and found employment.

2. **The newsletter would promote in-service workshops/activities for educational practitioners engaged in the vocational needs of their students.** Informational and how-to articles would offer strategies for building or expanding counseling and educational services available to adult learners.

3. **The newsletter would provide ready-made lesson plans dealing with workplace and job-skills information.** The STUDENTaccesspages could be photocopied by educators, counselors, and volunteer tutors and serve as classroom teaching/discussion tools.

4. **The newsletter would invite specialists in the area of training and employment to share materials, concepts, and personal philosophies with PASSAGE's readers**. Job developers, career guidance counselors, educators, adult learners, and others involved in workplace literacy, job/skills training, and academic programs would be asked to submit material for PASSAGE.

5. **The newsletter's information would have statewide application.** Workplace and job-skills information of relevance to adult learners residing in Pennsylvania would be featured in PASSAGE's training and employment articles; therefore, labor market information for Pennsylvania would serve as a guide for the newsletter's development of these articles.

6. **The newsletter would highlight resource centers and materials that are available at no cost or low cost to adult basic and literacy education practitioners and their students.** The editorial staff would seek and report on materials and information available through local libraries, bookstores, clearinghouses, and adult education centers.

7. **The newsletter would concentrate on the academic and economic barriers faced by many adult learners wanting to improve their employment situation.** PASSAGE would emphasize social service agencies, educational institutions, vocational training schools, and state-affiliated programs that offer services to adult learners needing personal, economic, educational, and employment assistance.

PROCEDURES TO ATTACK THE PROBLEM

After receiving the first issue of PASSAGE, *What's The Buzz* Editor Dave Fluke stated, "The large nuts-and-bolts articles in the first issue certainly are a good start...Keep up the good work." The Midland Center, Inc. was especially pleased with Dave Fluke's comments because he had summarized the type of publication we had envisioned.

The Midland Center, Inc. was prepared to use its history of working with labor-management groups, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, private companies, and dislocated workers to write a statewide workplace and job-skills information newsletter.

Since 1983, The Midland Center, Inc. has been working with the unemployed and underemployed to address their education and job-skills training needs. First-hand experience with program development and client services provided the groundwork for writing PASSAGE.

Each issue of PASSAGE required extensive research, writing, and editing to assure the goals and objectives were being satisfied. Creativity also played an important role in the selection of articles for PASSAGE. Topics were selected because they were useful; then, the topics were discussed using a novel slant (i.e., Employee Homework, PASSAGE, June 1990). The editors could have simply written about the importance of reading in the workplace; however, they chose to provide employee case histories demonstrating how reading impacted the employees' jobs.

Guest writers were a welcomed feature of the PASSAGE newsletter. Throughout the 1989-1990 program year, the editorial staff contacted and featured guest interviews and articles. Individuals from many organizations, agencies, institutions, and programs in Pennsylvania provided valuable educational or employment information for PASSAGE. Interviewees included, but were not limited to, the following individuals: Rick Startari, Sales Representative, Digital Equipment Corporation, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Alix McVey, Staff Specialist for Adult Services, Bucks County Community College, Newtown, Pennsylvania; and Evelyn Hernandez, ABE/GED graduate, Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

The PASSAGE staff maintained contact with the readers and the Pennsylvania Department of Education to ensure that the newsletter's content and approach were relevant to the targeted audiences. The newsletter established a personal tone that often spoke to the readers on a one-to-one level. The

layout was designed for easy reading with larger print and more spaces between lines of text and paragraphs.

As requested, The Midland Center, Inc. circulated approximately 2,200 copies of PASSAGE across the Commonwealth and a limited number to heads of state departments of education. PASSAGE utilized *What's the Buzz's* mailing list along with additional entries added to the mailing list from the Pennsylvania Department of Education and related programs that were interested in receiving PASSAGE.

OBJECTIVES MET IN PASSAGE NEWSLETTER

In each issue, PASSAGE's main articles and side bars focused on a variety of educational, workplace, job skill, and employment topics to assist adult basic and literacy education practitioners and their students. All articles were designed to be accurate, timely, and appropriate to the target audiences.

Here is an overview of the different subject areas that were covered in the 10 issues of PASSAGE and the methods and sources that were used to write the articles.

TRAINING AND EDUCATIONAL TRENDS

The PASSAGE staff contacted state agencies and educational institutions and researched national, state, and local reports and press releases for updated projections on training and educational trends in Pennsylvania during the 1990s. Some of the articles featured in PASSAGE on this subject were "The Paralegal Profession--A Job For The 1990s," June 1990, and "Managing On-The-Job Responsibilities--Accountability In The Workplace," January 1990.

EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADULTS

The editors stressed the importance of education and how it directly relates to success in the workplace. The PASSAGE staff contacted employees, instructors, administrators, and students from adult basic education programs, colleges, and vocational schools across the Commonwealth. A few examples of articles that appeared in PASSAGE on educational options and opportunities for adults were "Today's Nontraditional Student," December 1989, and "Financial Aid: Taking The First Step," June 1990.

LABOR-MARKET PROJECTIONS

Several articles on labor-market projections were featured in PASSAGE. The information was obtained from federal and state press releases and reports. The February 1990 issue of PASSAGE contained an article titled "Preparing For The Year 2000" which discussed the retraining of older workers. Also, the March 1990 issue of PASSAGE featured an article titled "Service Is The Name Of

The Game--Jobs For A New Decade" which highlighted a recent survey by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry on job-market trends.

WORKPLACE LITERACY PROJECTS

The workplace is constantly changing, and companies throughout the United States are recognizing the need for establishing on-site workplace academic training programs. PASSAGE reported on what some companies are doing to prepare their employees and their organizations to meet the challenges of today's work world. PASSAGE researched various companies involved in workplace literacy projects and reviewed publications that featured workplace literacy topics. April 1990's issue of PASSAGE featured an article on this topic titled "An Important Investment For Employees and Companies" which highlighted the success of the Directions Program, a workplace literacy project funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

EMPLOYMENT/TRAINING SUCCESS STORIES

PASSAGE featured a number of student success stories during the 1989-1990 program year. The articles were designed to provide inspiration and real-life examples for adult learners who are continuing their education, preparing for a new career, or working on their job-search campaign. Newsletter staff members interviewed adult basic education and workplace professionals. Examples of articles that highlighted this topic were "New Beginnings And Happy Endings--Single Parent-Homemaker Programs," April 1990, and "Making Your Dreams Come True: Hard Work And Dedication," February 1990.

IN-SERVICE TECHNIQUES

Innovative articles on in-service techniques that enhance employment/training opportunities for the educationally and economically disadvantaged were presented in PASSAGE. Information for the articles was obtained from The Midland Center, Inc.'s network of individuals which includes educational practitioners, counselors, job developers, employees, and employers. Also, PASSAGE utilized its own in-house resources and experienced staff (adult education instructors and counselors) to prepare these articles. "Resume Writing--An Outline Of You And Your Abilities," March 1990, and "Cover Letters--Your First Introduction," December 1989, are samples of articles that were written on this subject.

WORKPLACE/CAREER TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Often individuals are intimidated by terms that are used in the workplace. In fact, each career field seems to have created its own special vocabulary that is used by employees every day. In several issues, the PASSAGE staff researched different career fields and publications for a list of

workplace/career terms and their definitions to assist adult students who want to become familiar with the language used in different occupations. "Workplace Terms," January 1990, and "Mathematics...What Is It?", May 1990, were articles that discussed this subject area.

JOB/CAREER/EDUCATIONAL EXPECTATIONS

PASSAGE invited job developers and guidance counselors to address job/career/educational expectations presented by adults returning to the classroom after dislocation or after a history of chronic unemployment. The articles emphasized the importance of education in today's work world and addressed the difficulties that adult students face when making career decisions. Some of the articles written on this subject were "Making A Career Choice," October 1989, and "Today's Nontraditional College Student," December 1989.

WORKPLACE AND JOB SKILLS RESOURCES

The PASSAGE staff researched and highlighted helpful workplace and job-skills resources (e.g., books, pamphlets, and programs) which are available at little or no cost to PASSAGE's readers. "Books To Help You With Your Job Search," February 1990, and "State College Community Education," June 1990, are samples of the articles written on resources available to adult students and adult education practitioners.

HIGHLIGHTING CAREERS

A regular segment of PASSAGE was the highlighting of different career fields. The staff interviewed different professionals in the workplace. The articles provided the readers with a solid concept of the day-to-day requirements, education, attitudes, and experiences that were needed by employees in sample career fields. "Computers Are Here To Stay," October 1989, and "The Machinist's Trade--A Blueprint For Success," March 1990, are samples of such articles.

STUDENTaccesspages

The STUDENTaccesspage, PASSAGE's innovative insert section, was featured in every issue of the newsletter. The STUDENTaccesspage is a unique classroom discussion tool that was designed to provide information and exercises that instructors, volunteer tutors, and program counselors can share with adult learners. This insert also places emphasis on individuals developing analytical thinking, problem-solving, and oral communication skills. The STUDENTaccesspage was written by an adult education instructor-counselor for fellow teachers and counselors who welcome ready-made lesson plans. Listed are the various subject areas that the STUDENTaccesspage featured during 1989-1990 program year.

SELF-DIRECTED STUDENT LESSON PLANS

These lesson plans were designed to promote effective job search and career-development strategies for adult students. December 1989's issue of PASSAGE featured "The Interview/Barriers And Responses" which detailed the interviewing strategies employers often use to screen potential employees.

STUDY HABITS AND BASIC SKILLS UPGRADING

PASSAGE focused on the importance of good study habits and basic skills upgrading in preparation for today's changing work world. The STUDENTaccesspage titled "Prioritizing," April 1990, discussed how adult learners can arrange work assignments according to time, order, and importance. These concerns are directly related to the company's needs and operations. In this insert, instructors asked students to rank, in order of importance, a list of workplace activities and to explain their responses.

PROBLEM-SOLVING AND GROUP-DECISION MAKING EXERCISES

In several issues of PASSAGE, the STUDENTaccesspage focused on participative exercises which encouraged problem-solving and group-decision making skills. "Workplace Problem-Solving Teams," November 1989, set up a job-related role playing exercise for adult learners. The insert introduced the importance of understanding group dynamics and participation.

ACADEMIC SKILLS USED ON THE JOB

Reading, writing, and math exercises that are linked to academic skills used on the job were also featured in PASSAGE and its STUDENTaccesspages. "Writing For Work," June 1990, discussed the need for solid writing skills on the job. Also, the accompanying STUDENTaccesspage featured a workplace memo that students were asked to read and make grammatical, spelling, and general communication corrections to the text. Then, the students were asked to compare their changes to the memo with PASSAGE's suggested corrections.

PASSAGE met and exceeded all objectives defined in The Midland Center, Inc.'s 1989-1990 "353 Special Demonstration Project Proposal." To ensure that all objectives were met for the program year, the editors reviewed the project proposal monthly before editorial assignments were given, and the editorial staff maintained regular contact with the Pennsylvania Department of Education and PASSAGE's readers. This ongoing communication enabled the editors to create a monthly newsletter that was resourceful, exciting, and responsible to its supporters.

FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION

In the November 1989 issue of PASSAGE, the article "Feedback: The Main Link" invited readers to share their ideas and opinions about the newsletter. Readers could write a letter to PASSAGE's editors or call The Midland Center, Inc.'s PA toll-free number to offer feedback.

In the May 1990 issue of PASSAGE, readers were asked to call The Midland Center, Inc.'s PA toll free number to participate in a brief phone survey. The newsletter's staff asked the readers how they felt about PASSAGE's content, readability, design, and utility. All responses were positive and provided the staff with useful feedback and ideas that helped improve the newsletter.

Here are some excerpts from letters received:

"What a great newsletter!!! Not only did I enjoy the articles, but I also made an important work-related contact as a direct result of reading the "WORKPLACE" article."

Patricia J. Adamczyk
Program Coordinator, Reading Area Community College,
Reading, PA

"Recently I had the opportunity to read your November 1990 issue of PASSAGE. It was excellent. I supervise the Eastern Region Vocational Education Field Staff of the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Your PASSAGE would provide excellent ideas to share with the various area vocational-technical schools, community colleges, and high school programs that our staff assist in the eastern part of Pennsylvania."

Robert W. Harrison, Chief
Vocational Field Services
Allentown, PA

"My director passed on to me her November 1989 issue of PASSAGE. Could I please be placed on your mailing list? I enjoyed the issue and found all the information interesting. I am a counselor of adults in Community Education."

Karen M. Lesch
Career and Education Counselor
Community Education
State College, PA

"I am writing to request a copy of the first issue of PASSAGE. I am an area coordinator for the Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council and am most interested in providing our tutors and students with this type of material."

Diane Nossek
Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council
Pittsburgh, PA

"I am sending along some information about the Job Corps that your readers may be interested in. You may want to include this information in one of your fine issues of PASSAGE."

Steve Brando
Job Corps
Mountaintop, PA

After reviewing an analyzing the feedback from educational practitioners, program operators, and adult students who receive PASSAGE, The Midland Center, Inc. believes that PASSAGE has become a valuable resource publication. PASSAGE has fulfilled the need for a statewide workplace and job skills information newsletter that has appeal, utility, and a future. PASSAGE complements existing

vocational/academic resources used in Pennsylvania's literacy and adult basic education classrooms and resource centers.

Internal evaluation of the newsletter project was conducted by the director of The Midland Center, Inc., the editorial staff, and other TMCI staff members who have published works in training and employment newsletters and manuals. Every issue of PASSAGE was proofread by no less than three individuals before going to the printer. Material presented as factual was checked for accuracy of source. Subjective material was analyzed for tone and appropriateness.

External evaluation of the newsletter project was completed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education during an on-site visit by Mr. Dan Partin. In addition, a number of phone communications with the Pennsylvania Department of Education yielded ongoing feedback and evaluation. Mr. Gary Wuslich, Director of Participative Programs for LTV Steel Corporation, not only provided written feedback, but he also provided resource articles and leads for material that was appropriate for PASSAGE.

In summary, PASSAGE has successfully established an informational exchange network which opens the communication channels among educators, students, and business professionals and encourages them to share resources. After one year in publication, PASSAGE has gained visibility, experienced recognition, and earned the respect of its readers. The editors wish to thank the numerous individuals who have called or written to share their thoughts and provide support.

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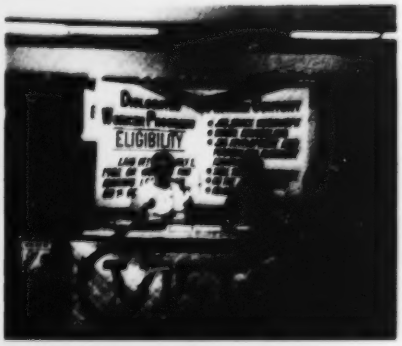
PASSAGE

"YOUR WORKPLACE AND JOB SKILLS INFORMATION NEWSLETTER" OCT. 1989

The Midland Center, Inc. and its Volunteers In Service To America Literacy Corps wish to thank the Pennsylvania Department of Education for the opportunity to publish a statewide newsletter which highlights training and employment information of interest to adult educators, adult learners, labor-management groups, and others engaged in workplace literacy initiatives.



Western Pennsylvania VISTA Literacy Corps' members promote training and employment programs.

The activity which is the subject of this publication was supported in part by the U.S. Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education should be inferred.

353 SPECIAL DEMONSTRATION PROJECT PREMIERES!!!

Welcome to PASSAGE, an innovative newsletter that brings training and employment information and other related workplace information to its readers throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

PASSAGE's intent is to do the legwork for you--to print articles complete with ideas, trends, "how-tos", and inspirations which will collectively affect the career development plans of adult learners.

PASSAGE will offer choices. Discover what the job market looks like today and what is being talked about for tomorrow's workplace. Explore educational programs and their link to employment opportunities. Learn what it means to transfer your skills to match seemingly unrelated job classifications. Meet labor-management leaders who pioneer employer/employee-involvement projects.

PASSAGE will motivate. Read about exemplary training and employment programs and share in the success of individuals who have created excitement, interest, and hope for adult learners in need of career guidance.

PASSAGE will network. Clue us in on what is happening in your literacy, adult basic education, and general education development (GED) programs that lead to further training and/or employment opportunities for displaced homemakers, dislocated workers, minorities, handicapped persons, and the educationally/economically disadvantaged.

PASSAGE welcomes teamwork. Call PA Toll Free 1-800-345-5443 with your questions or comments. Only by an exchange of ideas and knowledge can we develop methods to attain our goals of providing an informative and responsible newsletter. Teamwork is the necessary ingredient for success. Together, all of us can make PASSAGE a resource to take hold of opportunities and transform them into solid achievements.

JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES

An ongoing series of informative strategies on conducting a successful job-search campaign:

- Start your search for new or different employment as soon as you learn you have to.
- Make your job search campaign a full-time assignment. Do something every day, even include weekends. Do not allow yourself too many "little vacations."
- Establish your employment interests and realistic salary expectations.
- Activate your network. Contact every person that you know who may be in a position to help you identify and secure employment. Your network might include former employers, friends, relatives, coworkers, neighbors, congressmen, and others you have met who can offer you assistance. Make networking part of your everyday activity.

PASSAGE's STUDENTaccesspage serves as a dicussion tool for adult education practitioners, their students, and others interested in exploring training and employment topics. The STUDENTaccesspage can be duplicated for use by individuals and/or groups of individuals. See newsletter insert.

ENABLING THE DISABLED

A CREATIVE PARTNERSHIP

Disabled adults need not feel unemployable because of their physical and/or emotional difficulties. Companies who are working with the disabled are reporting that employees with a handicap do not necessarily require any special provisions in the workplace for them to do their jobs well.

Social service agencies and businesses are forming creative partnerships which assist the disabled by securing various training and employment opportunities.

The creative partnerships have been beneficial to the disabled and employers. Job-search time has been shortened for the disabled, and employers are reporting increases in their businesses' productivity and profitability.

Recently, the University of Pittsburgh studied a western Pennsylvania program titled "New Hire" which involves the cooperation of a nonprofit corporation for small business development assistance and an office of vocational rehabilitation working together to employ the disabled. The program, which is 18-months old, received high marks from the University of Pittsburgh's study because of its ability to assist with small business development and to find jobs for disabled workers.

Sixteen small businesses have already participated in the "New Hire" Program. Wages for the disabled range from $4 to $6 or more per hour in manufacturing, insurance, real estate, retail, and social service positions.

A granting agency to the nonprofit corporation for small business-development assistance is pleased that participating businesses in the "New Hire" Program have gained almost $200,000 in equipment funding and a capable work force screened by an office of vocational rehabilitation.

There is room in these creative partnerships for adult basic education and literacy program providers to act as ambassadors for their disabled students by contacting local offices of vocational rehabilitation and small business-development projects. We, as educators, must continue to stimulate the interest and dialogue which lead to training and employment opportunities for our disabled clients.

PASSAGE's advice: Research your local area to find what, if any, employment programs exist for the disabled. Be creative; invite interested parties to a meeting to discuss the possibility of a partnership. Everyone involved will benefit from your actions.

OVR: EMPLOYMENT SERVICES FOR DISABLED PERSONS

WHAT IS OVR? OVR is the Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, and it serves persons with disabilities that present a substantial handicap to employment and independence. Services are provided when there is a reasonable expectation that employment is possible as a result of those services.

Here is a listing of OVR main offices and phone numbers:

ALLENTOWN (215) 821-6441
ALTOONA (814) 946-7240
DUBOIS (814) 371-7340
ERIE (814) 871-4551
HARRISBURG (717) 787-7834
JOHNSTOWN (814) 255-6771
NEW CASTLE (412) 656-3070
PHILADELPHIA (215) 351-1900
PITTSBURGH (412) 565-2430
READING (215) 378-4370
ROSEMONT (215) 525-1810
WASHINGTON (412) 223-4430
WILKES-BARRE (717) 826-2021
WILLIAMSPORT (717) 327-3600
YORK (717) 757-4821
ANDREWS CENTER (814) 255-5881

CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION

Information shared with an OVR Counselor is confidential. A client's written permission must be obtained before any information can be released to others.

PASSAGE appreciates the Beaver County Area Labor-Management Committee (BCALMC) and The Midland Center, Inc. (TMCI) for their financial and technical support.

PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW

QUESTIONS THE INTERVIEWER MAY ASK (PART I)

Before you schedule an interview with an employer, it is to your best advantage to have an outline or a basic idea of what questions the interviewer may ask. *Listed below are common questions that many employers ask individuals they interview.* Before the interview, have an answer formulated in your mind for each question. Being prepared for an interview will increase your confidence, impress the employer, and improve your chances for employment.

Here are some questions and ideas for answers to get you started:

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE COMPANY?

Be certain to research the company before going on an interview. Show that you made an extra effort and that you are really interested in the position. You can get information about the company at the library, or you can call the company before the interview and ask for information. They will be more than glad to help you.

CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT YOUR EDUCATIONAL AND EMPLOYMENT BACKGROUND?

Remember, a job interview is for selling your abilities and skills to an employer. Do not sell yourself short! In the interview, find ways of relating your past educational and employment experiences to the new job. If you have worked at a fast-food restaurant, then you possess time-management skills, oral-communication skills, and the ability to work under pressure. Make the connection and be creative!

WHY DID YOUR LAST JOB END?

When asked this question, do not insult your previous employer. Insulting your previous employer will indicate to the interviewer that there may be a potential problem if you are hired. Even if you had a negative experience with a former employer, relate only the positive aspects of your former position.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM SOME OF THE JOBS YOU HELD?

Once again, every job you have ever held should be considered valuable experience. Make a mental list of what you learned from past jobs. For example, you may mention the importance of teamwork, patience, or responsibility on the job. In most cases, job seekers do not realize the many skills they possess.

Continued on Page 4

GOOD ADVICE

MAKING A CAREER CHOICE

Throughout our lives, we continually find ourselves faced with decisions and alternatives that ultimately affect our future.

Think back to the period in your life where you had to make decisions relative to choosing a career or beginning a job search campaign. You probably asked yourself, "What am I going to do with the rest of my life? Should I further investigate a skills-training program or pursue employment opportunities?"

Sometimes decisions we make seem final in nature. Keep in mind that we have plenty of time to change our minds and explore new options. Try to realistically know the limits of your strengths and weaknesses. Pay careful attention to those areas (i.e., skills, aptitudes, abilities, and interests) that will play integral roles in successfully attaining the goals you have set for yourself.

We must not think in terms of making that singular career choice for life. Put forth all of the necessary energy towards goal attainment and do the very best you can. It is your decision to make changes throughout your life. You master your own destiny.

"Though no one can go back and make a brand new start my friend, anyone can start from now and make a brand new end."

Carl Bard

Interview . . . Continued from Page 3

WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THIS POSITION?

Employers expect honest answers when they ask this question. Also, they expect you to have self confidence. A common response to this question is, "That's a hard question. I really don't know what the other candidates have to offer." Although this is an honest response, your best approach is not to worry about the other people applying for the job and to concentrate on what you have to offer to the employer. Don't forget - SELL YOUR TALENTS AND ABILITIES!!!

In next month's issue, we will present more questions that employers ask during interviews.

Counselor and client exchange ideas.

A NOBLE PROFESSION

TODAY'S TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT COUNSELORS

Counseling has become such a common part of our lives that we now have counselors for every phase of our existence. There are child counselors, school counselors, marriage counselors, legal counselors, and after all is said and done, we have funeral counselors.

Effective training and employment counselors, not unlike their associates, are often faced with individuals in distress--people facing unexpected changes or crises in their lives. These clients bring T&E counselors their troubles, questions, and personal dilemmas with hope of receiving empathy, direction, and solutions. T&E counselors, by taking a look at some simple practices, can avoid the common pitfall of bundling up the clients' problems into neat packages.

For example, it's not so difficult for the T&E counselors to take a good look at the clients sitting across the room. These people are no different than T&E counselors; in fact, the only

Continued on Page 5

USING THAT WORD PROCESSOR

If you have word processing experience or are attending classes in word processing, here are some ways to get the most out of it:

- Once you start writing, don't stop to correct spelling errors or to reorder ideas. You'll interfere with the creative flow.
- Use the spellcheck feature when you are finished. If you're a perfectionist, this will give you a sense of security that will discourage you from making changes as you go along.
- Print out what you've written. Read it through first without making changes. Then do your editing on the printed copy. You'll catch more errors that way.
- Put the printed copy aside for as long as possible.
- Make all editing changes on the word processor. At this stage, you may want to make other changes.
- Print out another draft for proofreading. Also, you may want someone else to check for errors.
- Always proofread one final time.

Source: How to Write Like an Executive; by Patrica H. Westheimer and Vicki Townshend Gibbs; Scott, Foresman and Co.; Professional Publishing Group; 1900 E. Lake Ave., Glenview, IL 60025.

T&E Counselors . . . Continued from Page 4

difference between the counselors and the clients is that life provided different paths for each to follow.

When one really considers all of life's twists and turns, there is no guarantee that the roles of each will not be switched sometime in the future. Effective T&E counselors understand this. They appreciate teamwork--the counselor and client working together to advise, to problem-solve, and to support each other in the decision-making process.

Secondly, T&E counselors can create a support network which can help them better serve their clients. Don't feel that the training and employment counselors need to work alone. There are many resource persons who can help with the clients' career-direction needs. An exchange of ideas and expertise is healthy in all professional fields. Established referral networks are necessary to avoid burnout and to provide clients with comprehensive assistance.

In summary, when T&E counselors feel that their work is becoming so routine to the point where they begin to perform their duties mechanically, they should stop, clear their thinking, and take into account the hopes, dreams, and fears of those that they are committed to help. With this practice, all T&E counselors can see clients as persons like themselves. Only then can they know how to help others in the most meaningful way.

PASSAGE will highlight the practices and personal philosophies of training and employment counselors who have made a significant impact on the quality of client services.

COMPUTER CAREERS

COMPUTERS ARE HERE TO STAY!

Recently, PASSAGE had the opportunity to interview Rick Startari, Sales Representative, at Digital Equipment Corporation in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He has worked 10 years in the computer field and has a B.S. in Accounting from Robert Morris College. In this interview, Rick gives interesting up-to-date information and insight to adult learners interested in the vast computer field.

PASSAGE: What are some of the many areas of specialization that exist for people interested in the computer field, and what is expected of them?

MR. STARTARI: In the computer field, there are many areas that one can choose from. Let me share some of the exciting opportunities that are available in the computer industry.

Continued on Page 6

Computers . . . Continued from Page 5

Computers complement the workplace environment.

If you are interested in computer sales, then it is important to possess people skills. You must understand the needs of the customer and the manufacturer. Learn to listen to the customer and the manufacturer, and learn to speak their language. Self-motivation also is an essential part of being successful in computer sales.

Software technical support is another key area in the computer field. A person working in systems software needs to know how to run a computer system effectively for their clients. Each system should suit the many special needs of a company. The field is constantly growing and changing, so keep up-to-date with the changes.

Equipment maintenance is a necessary part of the computer field. Companies look for computer organizations that provide maintenance contracts. Few companies can afford to have their computers down for any length of time.

In the area of programming, the more computer languages you know the better. I would suggest getting some basic schooling in programming which will provide you with the fundamentals of knowing how a computer operates. Then find a position and work at getting as much experience as possible. School and experience are a great combination in any field.

PASSAGE: What courses or subject areas are important to adult learners wanting to enter the computer field?

MR. STARTARI: Because of the fact that the computer field is so diversified, all academic skills are important. You never know what opportunities may be available to you in the near future, and strong academic skills will keep you from limiting your options in this field. Reading, writing, and math skills provide a solid foundation for computer literacy.

PASSAGE: Is a college education important to people wanting to enter this field?

MR. STARTARI: Having a degree is important to most companies that are involved in computers. I would suggest obtaining at least a two-year degree from a community college. Also, when you are in school, take at least four or five computer courses. Find a job and get that experience; you can always go back to school and get specialized training once you have found an area in the computer field that interests you.

Continued on Page 7

TIME-MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS

- Set goals and prioritize every morning (list goals and set priorities regarding those goals).
- Make a daily "to do" list. A good idea would be to make yourself a list and to grade it (prioritize).
- If you are confronting a monumental task, segment it into manageable steps. Then proceed to attack each step one at a time until the task is completed.
- Ask yourself often, "What is the best use of my time RIGHT NOW?"
- DO IT NOW!!! Tasks grow when you put them off.

Source: TARGET Single Parent/Homemaker Program Manual. The Midland Center, Inc., 617 Midland Ave., Midland, PA 15059

A VALUABLE RESOURCE

WORKPLACE

Workplace is a State Library of Pennsylvania program funded by the Kellogg Foundation. This program has sites in 33 public libraries in Pennsylvania.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF WORKPLACE? Workplace helps adults make job, career, and education decisions. Job seekers will be able to clarify their needs, evaluate their skills, explore today's work world, and make career and job decisions.

HOW DOES WORKPLACE HELP JOB SEEKERS? It offers valuable information concerning resume preparation, interviewing skills, career guidance, educational opportunities, and agencies of local and state governments.

WHAT WILL JOB SEEKERS BE ABLE TO DO THROUGH WORKPLACE? The Workplace program will enable individuals involved in a job search to use career exploration software, access several newspapers, find company information, identify educational programs, become computer literate, attend informational workshops, and utilize job-related books and videos.

For more information about WORKPLACE and its services, contact your local library for the nearest site.

PASSAGE would like to thank Steven Mallinger, Workplace Project Director, State Library of Pennsylvania, for his valuable time and assistance.

Computers . . . Continued from Page 6

PASSAGE: What specialized areas in the computer field are in demand?

MR. STARTARI: Maintenance and software specialization are fields that are growing every year. Maintenance is a priority to all organizations relying on computers for their daily operations. Also, hardware is becoming more standardized and more attention is being placed on software.

PASSAGE: What future changes, directions, or demands do you anticipate in the computer field?

MR. STARTARI: I believe there will be more networking of computer systems. In other words, different types of computers and brand names can work together.

PASSAGE: What advice would you give to an adult learner interested in a career in computers?

MR. STARTARI: The computer field is here to stay. Don't give up on your interest in computers! The field changes quickly, and there is always room for more people.

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS!

JOBS IN THE COMPUTER FIELD

Many of us have played games on a computer either at home or in local arcades for the sheer fun of it, but computers offer exciting careers as well as entertainment benefits. The demand for computer operators, programmers, word processing personnel, and systems analysts is growing vigorously year by year. With a career in any of these positions, one could be earning a decent wage that permits popping dollars into a bank account as well as quarters into a computerized game machine.

The need for computer-literate personnel extends across Pennsylvania with its highest demands in the metropolitan areas of Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, and Philadelphia. In the Pittsburgh labor market, which is representative of the other two areas as well, between 11,000 and 12,000 new employees will be needed to fill computer-related positions in the next two years.

These jobs are not always minimum wage offerings. With just one or two years of computer training/experience, a new hire can expect to earn a base wage ranging between $7.00 - $8.00 per hour; this rate is even higher if one is in the right job market where demand for computer literate personnel outweighs the supply.

Continued on Last Page

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Opportunity . . . Continued from Page 7

From all indicators, the demand for knowledgeable computer employees will not end soon. The latest growth figure for computer-related fields is 26.7% in western Pennsylvania; this figure translates into almost 6,000 jobs for computer employees annually in the Pittsburgh area alone.

Acquiring the necessary training for these well paying computer jobs does not necessarily mean that one must go through four years of college, although a college degree is often required for the systems analysts field. Thousands of individuals from various academic levels, including progressing readers and writers (adult basic education students), can move into a computer job with the minimum requirement of a certificate from a junior college or computer training school. Many times, a short customized course in computer skills is all one needs to land a good job in the computer field.

The boom in computer-related employment is producing many positive side effects, too. There is a healthy awakening of an intense desire to become more proficient in the disciplines of English, math, spelling, and creative writing. These are important skills to operate a computer efficiently and well. In short, computer literacy opens the doors to a vast new wonderland of economic promise and polished academic skills that could last a lifetime.

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PASSAGE

"YOUR WORKPLACE AND JOB SKILLS INFORMATION NEWSLETTER" NOV. 1989

FEEDBACK: THE MAIN LINK

PASSAGE received a wonderful response from many readers about its first publication, and we thank all of these individuals for their encouraging feedback. We appreciate your ideas and kind words to help us do an even better job in future issues.

Allow us to share with you a few comments we received thus far:

"I would like to take this opportunity to commend you on a fine first issue of PASSAGE, and I look forward to future issues."

Janet N. Gilroy, M.S.

Coordinator of Admissions/Director, Career Development Guidance Center, University of Scranton, Scranton, PA

"What a great newsletter!!! Not only did I enjoy the articles, but I also made an important work-related contact as a direct result of reading the "WORKPLACE" article."

Patricia J. Adamczyk

Program Coordinator, Reading Area Community College, Reading, PA

"I received your first issue of PASSAGE and was very impressed. The large number of self-help, nuts-and-bolts articles in the first issue certainly is a good start....Keep up the good work."

Dave Fluke, Editor

The Buzz: Newsletter for Practitioners and Friends of Adult Basic Education, Troy, PA

PASSAGE will continue to meet the needs of its readers. We can do this with your help; keep those letters, calls, and ideas coming. Thanks again to all of you for your wonderful support.

EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES

INTRODUCING THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET

Consider how employers hire. Ask yourself, "Where is the first place an employer looks when he/she needs to fill a position? Where should I look?"

LISTING OF JOB MARKET TERMS

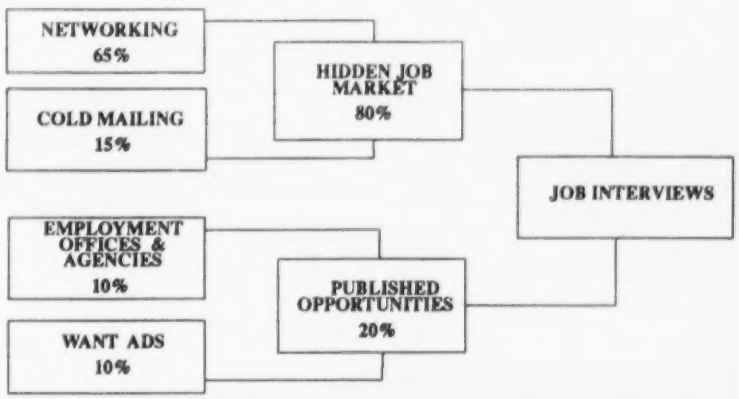
HIDDEN JOB MARKET - An untapped resource that helps you find employment. Identify persons who can provide you with help in getting a job.

NETWORKING - A plan of action that helps you keep in contact with those resource persons. Use consistent methods to contact those persons who can help you find employment.

COLD MAILING - A comprehensive approach of reaching employers who have not publicly advertised potential job openings. Send your cover letter and resume to companies that interest you in the event that a position opens up requiring your skills.

PUBLISHED OPPORTUNITIES - These sources are want ads in newspapers, bulletin boards, job centers, and employment agency listings. Follow through on checking these traditional sources of job leads.

Use the following chart to help you with your job search efforts. It is to your best advantage to concentrate your time and energy in areas that will produce positive results.



JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES

Part two of an ongoing series of informative strategies on how to conduct a successful job search campaign

- Inventory your abilities, interests, and skills. Know yourself!
- Study your local labor market to find job openings compatible with your qualifications.
- Arm yourself with quality, clear, and factual job search related materials (resumes, cover letters, typed applications, and reference lists). These materials should be error free. Check for proper punctuation and grammar, and be certain that all information is factual. Your materials are a representation of yourself.
- Follow-up job leads immediately. It is important to act as soon as you can on a job opening. Within a week after an interview, contact the employer. Send a "thank you" letter, or make a telephone call.
- Keep a complete record of your job search campaign (companies contacted, applications submitted, and results obtained).

STUDENTaccesspage success story

GETTING A JOB BY WAY OF THE BACK DOOR

On July 31, 1985, I became what is known as a "displaced steelworker." Displaced is a nice way of saying that your job no longer exists. Not only did my job end, but also my dreams and plans for my family and myself were shut down and left idle like many of the steel mill furnaces I used to rebuild. Now it was time to rebuild myself.

The beginning of middle age is not the best time in life to be learning new tricks. However, this old dog was determined to make things change for the better. Three years of college (two of them while on Public Assistance) polished my writing talents and created a zest for learning about computers and computer programming. My teachers said I was very good with computers and possessed a talent for writing. They added that I would go far in the employment world. Well, I did go "far"; I went to Pittsburgh, all over Beaver County, and I took a side trip to Maryland in search of a job. I was told that I was either overqualified or I didn't have the type of training they desired. (Gee! This job seeking was getting tough.)

Things started to look hopeless until a call came from the college I attended. The caller informed me about a position with VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America) at The Midland Center, Inc. "What? A volunteer job? Hey, I need a real job," I told the caller. As luck would have it (I do get lucky every few years), she convinced me that the experience gained would help a great deal in finding employment. "Okay, I'm game," I replied. Really, though, I was skeptical.

Looking back on that conversation a year ago, I am thankful that I was convinced to become a volunteer. My service with VISTA gave me opportunities to show what I can do with a pen and a computer linked to my talents and dedication to perform at my best. I learned many of the "procedures" of office work and teamwork. All of these experiences led to a staff position with The Midland Center, Inc. Now, I am doing what I always wanted to do -- write, compute, and help others. The best part of all is that I am getting PAID to do it! NEATO! Getting a job by way of the back door is fine with me.

If you are seeking employment and finding the search unfruitful, why not give volunteer work a chance? You'll gain the experience employers desire, learn how to cope with day-to-day dealings with people, and make many contacts that could get you a job. Hey, it worked for me; why not you? Go for it!

- EDWARD THOMA, PASSAGE CO-EDITOR

TIPS ON CHOOSING A TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT AGENCY

1. Find out how long the agency has been in business. *(It takes time to build a solid network of employment sites.)*

2. Investigate the agency's reputation. *(Check on their performance by asking a few firms about them.)*

3. Where are the agency's offices located? *(Employment sites are usually obtained close to the agency's office. An office far from you may mean long trips to work.)*

4. Do they specialize in any field such as computers, nursing, etc.? *(If so, you will be required to know the terminology of that field. If you do, you can possibly earn more income.)*

5. Do they promise to get you a full-time position? *(Be careful! Temporary agencies are just that. They are not employment agencies.)*

6. Are you required to maintain a special wardrobe? *(A good temporary agency will be concerned about your appearance as well as your performance.)*

7. Inquire about the average set wages. *(Your skill level should command the appropriate earnings.)*

8. If you acquire additional skills, can you earn more? *(Increased skills should bring increased pay.)*

9. Can the agency offer in-house training? *(Good temporary agencies are concerned about meeting the needs of their clients and retaining good employees; thus, they should provide for in-house training on current job requirements.)*

DIVERSITY IN A SINGLE EMPLOYMENT FIELD

TEMPORARY JOBS WITH A PERMANENT EMPLOYER

The ups and downs and merry-go-rounds of the business world have made many employers reluctant to hire full-time employees; consequently, these employers find it financially desirable to hire part-time workers for their business peaks and then layoff part-timers during business downtimes. Other businesses with a large work force face a steady stream of personnel going on vacations, calling off ill, or retiring. To fill in the employment gaps for the above business firms, a new industry has sprung up which is thriving in today's job market and is known as the TEMP employment industry.

Temporary help agencies employ workers who wish to work full or part-time; both employment slots involve working as a temporary employee for various companies. The experiences and contacts provided by such assignments are indeed broad. In fact, thousands of people have become so well trained in this industry that they hold down full-time jobs by working for three or four different firms week after week. Sometimes their paychecks are equal to or greater than those workers who are employed full-time by just one company.

The advantages of this type of employment are numerous. For one, picking your own working time and employer is entirely possible. Many temporary help firms allow their employees to accept or deny an assignment, within limits, of course. Many individuals enjoy the diversity of jobs and companies (they view staying at one particular job or company as boring). The ever-changing work environment and duties keep these workers fresh and productive as they respond positively to each new challenge.

Perhaps your personality is similar to those described above or perhaps you have difficulties in securing full-time (maybe even part-time) employment. If so, why not contact a few temporary help agencies in your area and set up an interview with them? Such a beginning could lead to full-time employment as a temporary worker or even put you on the inside track for a position with a single firm. After all, if a company to which you are assigned should need an employee, and you happen to fill their needs, you could be asked to stay on permanently.

Take the opportunity as a temporary to get your leg, instead of your foot, inside the door to employment; it could put you in the fast lane for a good job.

PENNSYLVANIA JOB CENTER NETWORK

There is a new kid on the employment resources block that is ready to help job seekers. The new kid is the Pennsylvania Job Center Network established by Pennsylvania Governor Robert P. Casey.

The Pennsylvania Job Center is designed to be a "one stop" location for those needing employment assistance, and it also provides referrals to appropriate agencies for other needs as well. Presently, 46 Pennsylvania Job Centers have opened across Pennsylvania with an additional 33 sites to be announced.

Services include, but are not limited to, employment help, workshops, GED preparation, small business start-up assistance, on-the-job training, financial and energy assistance, and veterans' programs. Most of these services are free.

Your area may already have a Pennsylvania Job Center in operation ready to help you. Check with your local Pennsylvania Office of Employment Security for the Pennsylvania Job Center nearest you. Take advantage of this vast network of assistance and opportunities that could put your career plans in high gear.

The activity which is the subject of this publication was supported in part by the U.S. Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education should be inferred.

LABOR-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

COMMUNICATING IN THE WORKPLACE

PASSAGE asked Corrine S. Halperin, Executive Director of Northwestern Pennsylvania Area Labor-Management Council of Erie, Pennsylvania, to provide information about the role of labor-management committees in today's workplace.

PASSAGE provides this helpful information to adult educators who teach oral communications and problem solving skills to adult learners. Many adult learners seeking employment may find themselves employed at a worksite where labor-management committees take an active part in decision-making and other related activities; therefore, communication skills learned in the classroom can greatly assist adult learners who are preparing to enter today's work world.

Mrs. Halperin shared with us interesting highlights from the past and the present concerning labor-management committees. For example, we learned that labor-management committees were formed during both World Wars to meet and discuss ways of working together to increase a spirit of unity in the workplace during times of crisis.

This spirit of unity has continued down through the years, and labor-management teams still meet today to address common concerns of the workplace. When labor and management work together, each person has the opportunity to play a valuable role in the success and direction of the company. Labor-management committees work hard to improve the quality of worklife, economic stability, and job security. These committees include other workplace concerns such as exploring the impact of new technologies on the worker and the workplace and competition in the marketplace, too.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 5)

LABOR AND MANAGEMENT WORKING TOGETHER AS A TEAM

STUDENTaccesspage

FOCUS: Workplace Problem-Solving Teams

INTRODUCTION

Job-Related Role Playing For Adult Learners

A problem has been identified at Company X (see problem statement) which needs to be addressed by a labor-management team that is interested in working together.

TIPS FOR THE INSTRUCTOR

Cover the underlined words in a vocabulary lesson. Pay special attention to the ground rules for problem-solving teams. Assist the students with the dynamics of a group, explaining the importance of participation. Encourage them to express their ideas and to have fun with the activities as they role-play employees of Company X. **CAUTION: Be sure that the students are not generating solutions before the problem(s) and causes have been clearly identified in detail.**

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Absenteeism *in Company X's assembly line department has risen 15% in the last six months and* ***production*** *has slowed down 25% at a cost of $400,000.00 to the company. The company can no longer remain* ***profitable*** *and* ***competitive****.*

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

A. Six hundred employees work on the assembly line (18 are management personnel).

B. Equipment breakdown has been an ongoing problem since Company X purchased new machinery.

C. Computers to record the daily production figures have been added to the department.

D. Seven hundred individuals used to work on the assembly line prior to the recent six months' layoff of 100 workers. The company can no longer support those positions and remain competitive.

GROUND RULES FOR GROUP PROBLEM-SOLVING ACTIVITY

1. Avoid arguing. Use ***logic***, and listen to others.

2. View the opinions of others as helpful.

3. Don't change your mind just to reach an agreement if you cannot support (at least partially) ideas you are unable to agree with (always seek at least partial agreement).

4. Practice decision-making by ***consensus***.

5. Invite all team members to discuss the problem.

6. Appoint a group leader(s) who can help with the problem-solving process.

ACTIVITY ONE

Look at the above background information. As a group, use the exercise of ***brainstorming*** to list all possible causes of the workplace absenteeism problem. Have a member of the labor-management team act as the ***recorder*** of these ***causes***.

Read all of the causes, and decide as a group which causes can be verified with facts and other data. Agree on the causes (have consensus from the group).

ACTIVITY TWO

Identify possible solutions. Use your brainstorming technique again. Establish the best solution(s). How? Give specific details of the solution(s). What would be the cost (if any) of the solution(s)? What are the benefits of the solution(s)? What time period is required to ***implement*** the solution(s)? Decide as a group which solutions(s) will be implemented at Company X.

ACTIVITY THREE

Set up a planning (responsibility) worksheet. It can look like the following example; however, the group can design their own final planning worksheet.

PLANNING WORKSHEET

PROJECT LEADER	SOLUTION	EXPECTED RESULTS
		COMPLETION DATE

ACTION STEPS	SEQUENCE	WHEN IT'S TO BE FINISHED	WHO'S RESPONSIBLE	HOW TO MEASURE RESULTS

YOUR INTERVIEW SURVIVAL KIT

You've worked hard in networking your job search, and now you have an upcoming interview. Don't jeopardize your chances for success by not being prepared. Below is a list of items that can help make your interview a launching pad to the job you seek.

EXTRA RESUMES - You may be referred to another department or branch office. Always offer a copy of your resume to each interviewer that you meet.

INK PEN, NOTE PAD, & PENCIL - The interviewer may give you phone numbers of persons to contact or directions to their offices at another worksite. Be ready to record any and all important instructions; don't trust them to memory.

MONEY: BILLS & CHANGE - Your interview may be rescheduled for a later time. Carry enough money for meals, parking meters, etc., in case of delays.

OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS - An interviewer may request to see your training certificates, DD form 214 (military record), diplomas, etc. Be prepared in the event verification is requested of your accomplishments.

Some of these items are necessary for each interview; others may be required according to company policy. When granted an interview, be sure to ask about what items you should bring to the interview. Avoid delays, and impress your potential employer by being prepared.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

Serving on a labor-management committee is indeed important work. The committee members are asked to implement ideas, to make the business more productive, and to offer technical assistance to employers who are willing to experiment with new ways of organizing work.

Labor-management teams generally consist of equal representation from both labor and management. By working as a unit, these two groups can offer different points of view that would not be brought to the company's attention if only one group made the decisions. Labor-management teamwork builds understanding and trust which have a positive effect on the company and its employees.

PASSAGE would like to encourage the development of participative activities within the adult classroom setting by using the labor-management committee approach. Innovative instructors and counselors can help adult learners with expressing their ideas, tackling problems, generating solutions, and feeling good about themselves as speakers.

SUGGESTION FOR THE CLASSROOM

This month's STUDENTaccesspage provides an example of a worksite labor-management issue that can be used as a classroom discussion tool. Have your students role play as management and labor representatives who have the task of solving a workplace problem. Involve their reading and math skills in seeking solutions to the problem. The STUDENTaccesspage will focus on facts which need discussion and figures which need to be manipulated in order to solve the problem statement. Be creative in the presentation of this activity; most important, be supportive of their ideas.

PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW

QUESTIONS THE INTERVIEWER MAY ASK (PART II)

This is the second part of a two-part series where PASSAGE assists job seekers in preparing for an interview. Listed below are questions that interviewers may ask and possible responses to those questions.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST STRENGTH/WEAKNESS?

When asked this two-part question, make certain that your response to the question is positive. In the interview, make your weakness become a strength. For example, "I tend to be too much of a perfectionist" can be a possible answer when asked

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)

PRE-EMPLOYMENT TESTING

Service-oriented industries are growing quickly in America, and obtaining employment in these industries requires that applicants have appropriate skills and personality traits.

To find out if applicants meet their needs, employers are instructing interviewers to look for candidates who fit their requirements. One of the ways interviewers determine who has the right qualifications is by administering pre-employment tests to all applicants. These tests grade job seekers as to honesty, I.Q., communication skills, academic skills, and personality traits in reference to the job opening.

When looking for employment, it would be to your best interest to understand and properly prepare for pre-employment tests. The results of these tests can be a major part of the hiring decision.

You can help to prepare yourself for such tests by seeking adult education centers, libraries, and schools in your area that can help you with math, verbal skills, and reading brush-up courses. Also, search bookstores for reference manuals on pre-employment tests to gain insight on what to expect. PASSAGE will give you a start by listing pre-employment references available at major bookstores and libraries. You will find these references published periodically in upcoming issues.

In short, do your homework and be prepared. Don't be caught by surprise and miss out on your opportunity to do well on a pre-employment test.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

about a personal weakness. Provide an answer that emphasizes your best and most attractive quality.

WHAT WILL YOU BE DOING FIVE YEARS FROM NOW?

The employer views each candidate as a possible investment. Even though it is difficult to predict what you may be doing in the future, remember that the employer is more interested in individuals who want to stay and grow with the organization.

WHAT ARE YOU EXPECTING AS A STARTING SALARY?

Be careful, this is a tricky question. Politely tell the interviewer that the salary is negotiable, and you are more than willing to discuss this topic if you are offered the job. If the interviewer is persistent, give him/her a salary range that is relative to the position being offered. (Be sure to research, before the interview, what salaries are earned in your career field.) Do not give a salary expectation that is unrealistic. Giving a salary quote that is below what is normally paid would give an employer the opportunity to take advantage of you. On the other hand, giving a salary quote that is far above what is normally paid could place you out of consideration for the job.

ARE YOU WILLING TO WORK ANY SHIFT AND WEEKENDS?

Try to be flexible and open to this question. An interviewer usually values individuals who are available to satisfy their work schedules. By being able to work different hours and days, you will improve your chances of employment.

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT FEATURE

A CAREER IN NURSING

Mrs. Judy Garbinski, Divisional Director of Allied Health Sciences, at the Community College of Beaver County, Monaca, Pennsylvania, comments on the growing opportunities for adult learners who are interested in the field of nursing. Mrs. Garbinski holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing along with a Masters Degree in Nursing Education from the University of Pittsburgh. Mrs. Garbinski is also a doctoral candidate at Kent State University.

PASSAGE: What can adult learners interested in nursing do to find out more about education and career opportunities in this field?

MRS. GARBINSKI: First, adult learners must investigate the different career options available to them in nursing. They will

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MRS. JUDY GARBINSKI, DIVISIONAL DIRECTOR OF ALLIED HEALTH SCIENCES, COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF BEAVER COUNTY

realize that these options have different academic requirements and time commitments.

Across Pennsylvania, there are community colleges, universities, vocational technical/training schools, and hospitals with helpful resource people and free information. Don't hesitate to use the telephone book to call these institutions and schedule a time for an informational interview. Also, adult education teachers may want to have a nurse or training school representative come into the classroom to speak to a group of interested students.

PASSAGE: How can adult learners prepare themselves today for tomorrow's opportunities in nursing?

MRS. GARBINSKI: Value education! Reading, writing, math, and oral communication skills provide the foundation for a career in nursing. Nursing, like most professions, offers a career ladder (career advancement) of opportunities. Adults entering any field of nursing can plan to add to their credentials and career options if they first acquire basic academic skills.

Then, by carefully selecting higher education programs that offer transferable college credits, adult basic education graduates can, once again, open up new options for added career opportunities. It's a good idea to select a program that permits you to move on to another degree or area of specialization. Again, investigate your options and plan for further education should you wish to move up the career ladder.

PASSAGE: What alternative is there for individuals who are unsure of their interest in the nursing profession?

MRS. GARBINSKI: Adults unsure of a long term commitment to nursing can explore the nurse's aide field. This field does not require a long term commitment of training time or money. A nurse's aide position provides exposure to other nursing careers and workplace experiences. There are differences between a nurse's aide and other nursing positions. Each nursing area has specialized education and job responsibilities; however, as nurses' aides, adults can readily find employment while investigating their interest in these nursing fields.

PASSAGE: Where can nurses seek employment?

MRS. GARBINSKI: Hospitals remain the largest employers of nurses; however, employment opportunities have expanded

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MAKING GOOD ON YOUR JOB

To be successful at your job, you may want to consider these suggestions:

- Produce results, not reasons. Bosses do not want to know how hard you work; they want to know what you have achieved. Always know what results are expected and produce or exceed them.
- Read, read, read. Know what people are thinking and responding to. Read Reader's Digest because 60 million people do. If you are in any way responsible for communicating with the public, know what that public is reading.
- Write, write, write some more. So few people in management are good writers that you will probably move to the top quickly if you can communicate your ideas effectively in writing.
- Remember that nothing counts but quality, and the boss and client define quality. If quality means "no typing errors," don't make any typing errors.
- Listen. Make sure you understand what the boss or client wants.
- Never lie. If you lie once, the boss or client will never know when you are telling the truth.

Source: David Kirk, Goebel, Kirk & Pilato Public Relations Inc., 1845 Walnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19103.

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to include other public and private clinics and business practices. Many qualified nurses have started their own private businesses in specialized areas such as nutrition.

PASSAGE: What personality traits seem to fit those who seek a career in nursing?

MRS. GARBINSKI: A caring attitude is extremely important. Patience is another trait that is required. Nurses must like people and be good listeners. Nurses must be able to follow directions and to deal with the unexpected. In nursing, crises happen; therefore, nurses must be able to deal with challenges in difficult situations.

PASSAGE: In general, what can an adult learner expect to encounter in today's and tomorrow's field of nursing?

MRS. GARBINSKI: Nurses have many opportunities to work with new technologies (health care equipment and procedures) that make their work challenging, efficient, and rewarding. The role of nursing has changed, allowing nurses to assume increased responsibilities. Because of this, nurses have gained more recognition for their contributions to patient care and health care in general. Also, nurses continue to earn better salaries as the demand for their skills increases.

BCALMC
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MIDLAND, PA 15059

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PASSAGE

"Your workplace and job skills information newsletter"

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PASSAGE
"YOUR WORKPLACE AND JOB SKILLS INFORMATION NEWSLETTER" DEC. 1988

TIPS FOR TAKING THE GENERAL APTITUDE TEST BATTERY (GATB)

The GATB is a common aptitude test used by both employers and schools.

1) Work as fast as possible.

Each section of the GATB has a time limit, and each section is designed to be long enough that you will not be able to complete it. Only the number of correct answers is important; skip questions you don't know until the others have been answered.

2) Always follow instructions.

Start taking the test when you are told to start, and stop taking the test when you are told to stop. Good test scores are determined from the number of correct answers and the *ability to follow directions.*

3) Don't be discouraged.

Some sections are easy, and some sections are difficult. Don't become discouraged because a section has many hard questions. Most likely, they are difficult for everyone else, too.

Aptitude tests are nothing to fear; just prepare for them, do your best, and they will help you determine many of your skills and talents. Once you have this knowledge, you can concentrate on a career that is in harmony with your interests and abilities.

APTITUDE TESTS

EFFECTIVE CAREER-DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

The route to employment may lead you through many experiences; in fact, somewhere along the road to a job you may encounter the experience of having to take aptitude tests. Many people are reluctant to take aptitude tests for various reasons. One reason is that they think aptitude tests may reveal academic short-comings which may keep them from being considered for employment.

Actually, aptitude tests are given to find out what career fields are best suited for individuals by identifying their talents and skills; therefore, aptitude tests are a big plus for people to determine what areas of employment and job training more closely match their current and potential skills and talents.

How do you study for aptitude tests? You really can't. You don't study for aptitude tests; you PREPARE for them by taking tests. Look for tests (any tests) in books, magazines, and newspapers; take all of them. This practice will mentally prepare you for paper and pencil aptitude tests. Some aptitude evaluations include manual dexterity tests (hands-on activities) such as removing pegs from one set of slots on a board to another set or fitting blocks of various shapes into like- shaped holes. For dexterity preparation, an old peg board will help. Practice removing pegs with both hands from one set of holes to another to get the feel of the procedure and to increase your speed. Cutting different shapes from old newspapers, mixing them up, and then matching each cut-out shape to the same shaped hole in the newspaper can help, too.

To be ready physically, don't stay up late the night before the tests -- being rested and alert are important. If you wear glasses and/or a hearing aid, wear these items when you take your tests. In spite of these preparations, you may feel nervous about

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PRE-EMPLOYMENT TEST RESOURCE GUIDE

As promised, PASSAGE is listing resources below that will help you prepare to take pre-employment tests for specific occupations and other skill areas; however, we recommend that you contact your local libraries and bookstores for a complete listing of materials available in your area.

Tip: Do not ignore the civil service test preparation workbooks; they are excellent materials for preparing you for occupational tests given by employers who are not filling government (civil service) positions. For example, the following occupational practice tests, and many others, are available in workbooks through the Barron Educational Series, Inc. and/or ARCO Publishing--a division of Simon and Schuster.

JOB TESTS FOR:

BASIC ACADEMIC SKILLS
CARPENTERS
ACCOUNTANTS/AUDITORS
SCHOOL CROSSING GUARDS
OFFICE MACHINE OPERATORS
MECHANICAL APTITUDE AND SPATIAL RELATIONS SKILLS
WELDERS
ELECTRICIANS
CLERICAL, TYPING, AND STENOGRAPHIC SKILLS
INSURANCE AGENTS
AUTO MECHANICS, AUTOMOTIVE SERVICEMEN

Footnote: THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CORP., ORDER SERVICE CENTER, P.O. Box 830054, San Antonio, Texas, 78283-9955, has a wealth of resources on specific vocational/aptitude testing instruments available to adult basic education practitioners. Call Toll Free 1-800-228-0752 to request a catalog which describes the tests and details all purchasing requirements and costs.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

taking aptitude tests. GOOD! This is the way you are SUPPOSED to feel. Your mind and body are preparing you for this important event. Your nervousness is really nothing more than your system becoming alert to do its best.

Finally, arrive at the test site early, and get comfortably settled. The person giving the tests wants to help you do your best; therefore, listen carefully to all instructions and DO ASK QUESTIONS if something is not clear to you. Follow through on being prepared, and you will do well.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

TODAY'S NONTRADITIONAL COLLEGE STUDENT

Alix McVey is a Staff Specialist for Adult Services at Bucks County Community College (BCCC), Newtown, Pennsylvania. Ms. McVey works with many nontraditional students (22 years of age or older) and encourages adult learners to continue their studies in preparation for higher education and skills training opportunities.

PASSAGE: How many nontraditional students are enrolled at BCCC?

MS. McVEY: Presently, we have 11,000 students attending Bucks County Community College. Out of that number, sixty-percent (60%) of the students are 22 years of age or older.

PASSAGE: What areas of skills training and/or college certification are attracting student enrollments?

MS. McVEY: A great number of nontraditional students seek career advancement. They find that a degree is needed to be promoted in their current place of work. Also, other individuals, especially single parents and homemakers, are finding it necessary to continue their education (college or skills training) in order to enter the work force. A majority of our students are enrolled in the business school or in one of the many helping fields (nursing, social work, and psychology).

PASSAGE: What has the college done to accommodate the special needs of the nontraditional student?

MS. McVEY: We have many programs and services that accommodate the special needs of nontraditional students. For example, The Career Development Center works with adults who are interested in attending college and need career guidance before entering college. They learn to focus on their

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IMPROVING YOUR TELEPHONE VOICE

Knowing how to use your voice on the telephone is a skill worth developing for today's job market. Here are some tips:

- Sit or stand tall when on the phone. If your chin is pressed against your chest or your head is bent sideways--to hold the phone between your head and shoulder while talking--your throat becomes strained, and the words could come out garbled.
- Answer the phone in a cheerful tone of voice. This immediately puts your caller in a good frame of mind and helps assure the success of the call.
- Speak softly. People enjoy talking to someone who isn't loud. By starting softly, you have leeway to raise your voice to emphasize key words that best sell or tell you story.
- Smile as you're talking. You'll feel good inside, and this feeling will carry over in your voice.
- Pay attention to names. Highlight your own name by saying it distinctly. Say it slowly and clearly, and do the same with the caller's name. Just saying a person's name puts life into your conversation.

Adapted from Speak Well--Sell Well: How To Make Your Telephone Voice A Money-Making Tool, Mills-Roberts Associates Inc., 1265 Broadway, New York, NY 10001.

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abilities, skills, and talents. Then, our Adult Services' staff continues to assist the students with making career decisions and choosing class schedules. Also, our GOALS Program helps educationally and financially deprived students with financial assistance and provides tutors for those students. If you are interested in attending a community college, you should see what similar services are available in your area.

PASSAGE: What are the advantages of working with nontraditional students?

MS. McVEY: I have found nontraditional students to be more motivated. They want to be in school, and they value their education. The "real life experiences" that adult students possess are advantageous to their success in the classroom and create a positive learning environment for others.

PASSAGE: What can an adult basic education student do to prepare for college?

MS. McVEY: Work on establishing good time-management and study skills. Many nontraditional students have a job and/or take care of a family while attending college. In order to be successful, they must be organized. Also, I believe that strong reading, writing, and math skills are necessary for students in college.

PASSAGE: In today's job market, why is continuing your education (college or skills training) becoming so important?

MS. McVEY: I think technology has changed the work world; because of this change, companies require newly hired employees to have a college education or specialized skills training. An increasing number of employers are giving preference to individuals who have furthered their education and/or vocational skills.

ENTRY-LEVEL EMPLOYMENT

KNOWLEDGE, GROWTH, AND SUCCESS ON THE JOB

Mr. William Camp, President of the Giant Eagle Supermarket located in Rochester, Pennsylvania, understands the importance of entry-level employees and their potential for success. Having started his career as an entry-level employee, he is an excellent example of how entry-level employment can establish many opportunities for individuals in the job market.

Mr. Camp started his retailing career as a worker in a small fruit market. Through years of working at various super

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AN INTRODUCTION TO CAREERS AND EMPLOYERS

Are you interested in finding out more about a particular career field? Are you worried that you may be choosing a career field that you will not like? Do you need to develop a job search network that includes individuals already working in your chosen career field? If you are asking yourself any of these questions, then you may want to consider job shadowing.

What is job shadowing? Job shadowing is a way to obtain actual working knowledge of an occupation by visiting a place of work and by observing on-the-job activities. Many companies are willing to work with adult learners by providing job shadowing experiences.

Job shadowing will give you an opportunity to ask questions, to form an impression of the job, and to showcase your interests and abilities. The knowledge you gain will help with your career decisions, and the job search network you create will establish contacts for future employment opportunities.

Use the following information to begin your job shadowing campaign:

- Identify the career areas that interest you. Identify the employers who hire persons in those career areas. Use libraries, job services, and newspapers to obtain employer information.
- Prepare a dialogue (telephone script) that you can use to make requests for job shadowing opportunities.
- Always stress your need to learn more about the occupation and your willingness to follow any special rules that the company has established for their employees (dress code, work schedules, etc.).
- Always thank the employers and the employees who permitted you to complete your job shadowing experiences. A thank-you note or letter is an appropriate way to show your appreciation for their time and consideration.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

markets and learning all aspects of the business from the bottom up, he gained the experience and knowledge needed to successfully manage and operate his own super market. "I started by learning the basics and by growing from the experience I had received on the job. It is necessary to gain the experience and confidence that is needed to develop a rewarding career.", states Mr. Camp.

Mr. Camp advises the management staff at Giant Eagle in Rochester, Pennsylvania, to identify employees who are willing to learn and willing to make decisions in the workplace. Because many of the employees work at the cash registers and wait on customers, management looks for individuals who have strong math and communication skills. Also, employee knowledge of computers is becoming more important in the operation of the store.

Often, many businesses like Giant Eagle offer company training programs for their employees. Along with on-the-job experience, employees (depending on their duties) are given training in such areas as management, customer service, and safety.

When asked if employee on-the-job responsibilities have changed over the years, Mr. Camp states, "Employees can greatly add to the success of the organization. Our employees make the customers feel welcome. I think businesses are finally getting back to what really matters--good customer service. The personal interaction with the customers creates an atmosphere that is pleasant for the employees and the customers."

Mr. Camp's main advice to adult learners seeking employment is, "Set a goal and strive for that goal. When starting your career, don't worry about obstacles; you can overcome them. Put forth the effort."

* Giant Eagle has 200 stores located in Western Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia.

WILLIAM CAMP IN HIS ROCHESTER GIANT EAGLE OFFICE

STUDENTaccesspage FOCUS: THE INTERVIEW/BARRIERS & RESPONSES

The interviewer has two primary goals:

1. To make himself/herself look good by hiring a quality employee or apprentice trainee
2. To screen out all undesirable candidates

To avoid being screened out, you must identify any barrier that you believe might hinder your employment/training effort with a particular company, and find a way to deal with the barrier. Again, if you can accomplish this, it is another step in being prepared for an employment/training interview.

THE EMPLOYER MAY VIEW ANY OF THE FOLLOWING TO BE A BARRIER FOR YOU, AND THE BULLET STATEMENTS INDICATE HOW YOU MIGHT RESPOND.

BARRIER: NOT ENOUGH WORK EXPERIENCE

RESPONSES:

- Fast learner
- Experience gained through hobbies and volunteer work (give concrete examples)
- Make positive statements about skills and abilities

BARRIER: EXPERIENCE LIMITED TO ONE INDUSTRY/COMPANY

RESPONSES:

- Skills can be transferred to a different industry/company (give examples)
- Show your loyalty and commitment to company

BARRIER: YOUR AGE (OLDER)

RESPONSES:

Stress the advantages of hiring/training older workers:

- Skills + experience = Reliability + dedication
- Unlikely to "job hop"
- Found to be more productive
- Place more value in the job
- Have much life experience to bring to job
- More realistic about abilities
- Possess "know-how" (good ideas from past jobs--able to offer suggestions to benefit company that increase efficiency and lower costs)
- Will cost employer less in fewer mistakes/lost time

BARRIER: YOU ARE UNEMPLOYED/MILKING THE SYSTEM

Note: You will know this is a concern if the interviewer asks a question like, "What have you been doing since you have been laid off?"

RESPONSES:

- Displaced due to the economic climate of the area
- Available to begin work immediately
- Have made your job search a full-time endeavor in an effort to find the appropriate position
- Have been updating your skills through training/schooling
- Have been doing remodeling/repairing/odd jobs

BARRIER: I CAN'T AFFORD YOU (MADE TOO MUCH MONEY--APPLIES TO DISLOCATED WORKERS)

RESPONSES:

- Emphasize that with the competitive market and the state of the economy, you will have to take a drop in wages, but willing to make the sacrifice for the opportunity
- Anticipate the challenges of learning a new job/skill with hopes for advancement

BARRIER: FORMAL EDUCATION IS INSUFFICIENT

RESPONSES:

- Confident that on-the-job training and experience (paid or volunteer) are equal to a formal education
- Willing to attend educational institutions while employed

BARRIER: YOU HELD ONLY ONE JOB

RESPONSES:

- Previous job provided satisfaction and financial support
- Performed job so competently that supervisors unwilling to move me
- Fast learner/eager to learn new responsibilities

BARRIER: NO SUPERVISORY EXPERIENCE

RESPONSES:

- Have functioned as a leader and have delegated/organized/implemented tasks and earned community respect (as club officer, coach, political involvement, civic/school organizations)
- Learned many different management styles from various supervisors and feel capable of direction/supervising

BARRIER: YOU ARE A FORMER UNIONIZED WORKER

RESPONSES:

- Shows that you were a dedicated member of an organization--loyal and hard-working
- Stress you were displaced through no fault of your own

REMEMBER: *DO NOT DEAL WITH THE BARRIER UNLESS THE SUBJECT COMES UP IN THE CONTEXT OF THE INTERVIEWER'S QUESTIONING.*

A CHECKLIST FOR PREPARING COVER LETTERS

Points to follow when writing a cover letter for a job opening

- Write your cover letter to a specific person (get the correctly spelled name and title). Do not use "Dear Sir or Madam" or "To Whom It May Concern." Call the company, explain your interest in the position, and ask for the name and title of the appropriate person to contact. (Address your cover letter to "Personnel Manager" when no company information is given in an ad).
- Design a concise cover letter. Use no more than 200 words. Your cover letter should not look like your resume. Have someone proofread your letter for spelling and grammatical errors.
- State your request for an interview within the body of the letter. If granted an interview, you will have the opportunity to discuss your qualifications and how you can benefit the organization.
- Let the employer know that you will be in contact with him/her. (optional)
- Mention in the letter that your resume is included for their review. The resume provides an organized summary of your skills, abilities, experiences, and education. Remember, the cover letter should make the employer interested in reading your resume.
- Include information that permits the employer to contact you (phone number and address).

YOUR FIRST INTRODUCTION

What is the main purpose of a cover letter? Often, a cover letter acts as your "first introduction" to an employer who is interested in hiring. This introduction letter must be designed to make the employer want to read your resume. Your cover letter should highlight (briefly) your abilities and personality. Be dynamic!

Also, a cover letter should be organized with the specific concerns of the employer in mind. Address the company's interests and needs, and convince the employer that you are interested in meeting those needs. Because some jobs will require different skills and duties, you may have to write a different cover letter tailored for each new job opening.

Below is a sample cover letter. Use it as a basic guideline to get you started. Make sure to use your own writing style and personal touch when preparing your cover letter. Be original. More information on cover letters is provided in the sidebar that accompanies this article.

Classified ad -- WANTED: Full time light residential construction and insulation. Hourly wage and benefits. Madden Construction Company, 555 Union Ave., Greensburg, PA 15301. Mitchell Garcia, Director.

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

January 2, 1989

Mr. Mitchell Garcia, Director
Madden Construction Company
555 Union Avenue
Greensburg, PA 15301

Dear Mr. Garcia:

In reference to your newspaper ad in The Times, I would like to express my interest in, and qualifications for, the residential construction and insulation position at Madden Construction Company. I am familiar with your company's Middleton Renovation Project and its impact on attracting new business to the area.

Mr. Thomas, the structural drafting and design instructor at Calvert Community College, mentioned that he has worked with you on the summer apprenticeship program which I completed this past year. His personal recommendation is enclosed with my resume.

Upon graduation in January, 1990, I want to use my structural drafting and design knowledge to develop the hands-on skills needed in the building trades industry. I am especially interested in being a part of a construction project from start to finish. I would greatly appreciate an interview to discuss my abilities and to learn more about the position. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Frank B. Smith
617 Electra Avenue
Citizen, PA 14595
(412) 555-1460

Enclosures

CLASSIFIED AD LANGUAGE

Below are some want ad abbreviations and letter codes with their definitions:

EOE - Equal Opportunity Employer

M/F - Male/Female

V/H - Veteran/Handicapped

To $20K - K means thousand; the job will pay up TO the amount specified; it could pay less.

BEN or BEN. - Benefits

W/ - W means "with"; the slash is usually followed by another letter code such as W/BEN.

W/EXP - with experience

EXP - Experience

EXP'D - Experienced

F/T - Full-time

P/T - Part-time

F/B - Fringe benefits

OTR - Over The Road; applies to truck drivers

NEC or NEC. - Necessary

WKDY - Weekdays

WKED - Weekends

REFs or REF - References

TRANSP. - Transportation

REQ or REQ'D - Required

SVC - Service

IMMED. - Either immediate or immediately

SAL - Salary

FL. - Floor

WANT AD JARGON

PUBLISHED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

COUNSELORS NEEDED: Telemarketing exp. nec. P/T - F/T w/ben. Apply wkdy in person. 603 Grant St., 3rd Fl., Forbes City. Ask for Mr. Cheska.

Are you unwittingly passing up good chances for employment because of puzzling want ad jargon? Abbreviated words and letter codes often appear in job advertisements, confusing even the most determined job seekers. PASSAGE contacted a number of newspapers across Pennsylvania to assist our readers in understanding want ad terminology.

Our investigation revealed a common trend among newspapers to discourage the use of abbreviations and letter codes in want ads. This trend is part of the newspaper publishing industry's ongoing attempt to provide reading material that is understood by the general public. Even with this combined effort of the newspaper industry to reduce want ad jargon, abbreviations and letter codes are still desired by many employers who place want ads.

When newspapers use abbreviations, they are taken from dictionaries and not from a newspaper's own abbreviation system. However, many employers use specific letter codes that are not found in dictionaries; in fact, each industry has its own coding system for want ads. The accompanying side bar to this article lists the more common letter codes and abbreviations used in employment ads.

When PASSAGE asked each newspaper representative for advice in understanding employment abbreviations and letter codes, just about all of them gave similar responses which are summarized below:

1) If some abbreviations are not familiar to you, keep a dictionary handy as a reference to their meanings.

2) If a phone number is listed in the ad, call the employer and ask about the meaning of the special letter codes.

3) If a phone number is not listed, call the newspaper office for help in understanding the special letter codes.

Don't be intimidated by what you don't understand in the want ads. Follow the above three steps and study our side bars; consequently, you will become skilled in cracking want-ad codes, and this will make your job search easier.

MORE CLASSIFIED AD INFORMATION

The following statements were taken from parts of classified want ads and may be worded to keep the number of applicants at manageable levels. Because want ads like these are difficult to interpret, many potential applicants do not apply for the positions advertised; therefore, when in doubt, apply for the job anyway.

Minorities and females encouraged to apply. (The employer may have an Affirmative Action Plan in place. Don't be discouraged from applying because you do not fit the description.)

Experience in telecommunications a plus. (This could mean being experienced in conversing over the telephone.)

The ideal candidate will be a self-starter with high energy. (The "ideal" candidate may be someone who learns quickly and is not afraid to work overtime.)

The desired candidate will have ten years of experience. (That may be desirable, but the company knows it is not always obtainable.)

A national/multinational firm is seeking an experienced professional with a proven track record. (The employer may need someone who already has experience but might consider others who are willing to show up everyday and accomplish their work.)

WORKPLACE MATH

"TWO PLUS TWO SHOULD EQUAL FOUR"

If you need to get a job, expect to use your math skills at work. Many jobs, including entry-level positions, require the use of math skills to monitor and report business information. Employers value employees who can easily and accurately work with basic number operations--addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, decimals, percents, etc. The math skills you are learning in your adult education program will be important tools in the workplace.

For instance, delivery persons for many manufacturing and service companies do more than just drive trucks. Included with their driving responsibilities are such duties as keeping accurate records of delivered or returned products, logging mileage, and recording other travel cost information.

Grocery store chains depend on employees who can use their math skills to complete product inventories. These food companies cannot afford to overstock or understock products because either action causes a loss of income to the store; therefore, stock clerks and department managers need to eliminate mathematical errors before making important decisions about ordering quantities of products. In addition, these inventories help the store owners to determine what products and name brands the customers are buying.

Maintenance workers need good math skills to complete a variety of on-the-job responsibilities. For example, these responsibilities may include the taking of measurements for construction and repair projects, the proper mixing of cleaning solutions, and the monitoring of specialized heating and air

(CONTINUED ON LAST PAGE)

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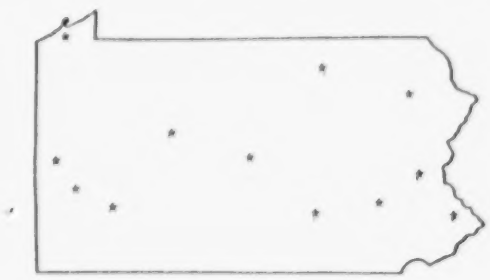
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

conditioning equipment. All of these tasks involve working with fractions, decimals, and percents.

The skillful use of math is a part of many jobs. Research the occupations that interest you and take a look at the math skills needed to perform well on the job. You can be an asset to any company if your record keeping skills and hands-on knowledge of math are above average. Math...who needs it? You need it!

HELP BUILD OUR INFORMATION EXCHANGE NETWORK!



* areas from which PASSAGE has received guest articles and/or reader feedback

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PASSAGE

"Your workplace and job skills information newsletter"

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PASSAGE

"YOUR WORKPLACE AND JOB SKILLS INFORMATION NEWSLETTER" JAN. 1990

WORKPLACE LITERACY SURVEY

How do Pennsylvanians feel about the topic of workplace literacy? What is the extent of the need for job-related basic skills instruction? Who is responsible for providing worker-related educational programs?

In an effort to answer the above and other questions on the subject of workplace literacy, PASSAGE's STUDENTaccesspage seeks to survey the opinions of a cross-section of individuals. Tell us what you think. Help us gain additional information from people you know.

How important is your participation in this survey project? Extremely important! PASSAGE is designed to reflect the opinions of its readers, to encourage an exchange of ideas, and to address the needs of those who face training and employment decisions. Please, continue your support and feedback! PASSAGE looks forward to reporting the results of the survey in an upcoming issue.

Duplicate enough copies of the STUDENTaccesspage so that students, coworkers, neighbors, and friends will be able to participate in our project. PASSAGE requests at least ten completed surveys from each program or organization that receives our newsletter; however, we would welcome as many responses as possible so that our findings will have value.

Send, in one envelope, the completed Workplace Literacy Surveys to: PASSAGE, The Midland Center, Inc., 617 Midland Avenue, Midland, Pennsylvania, 15059, on, or before, February 28, 1990. Your assistance with this project is appreciated.

EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE ADVISORY BOARDS

SPECIAL PARTNERS

If your ABE/GED program does not have an Employment Assistance Advisory Board to help your students in preparing for the job market, perhaps now is the time to consider organizing one. Advisory board members can make contributions to your program by providing guidance on specific job requirements, leads to job openings, assistance in job placements, and help with your program's operational needs.

One of the first steps in organizing an Employment Assistance Advisory Board should be to check with your funding agency for guidelines. By doing this, you will be informing the funding agency of your intentions while obtaining necessary information on policies and procedures concerning advisory boards.

Once you have the support of your funding agency to set up your Employment Assistance Advisory Board, carefully consider the composition of the board membership. If possible, invite individuals from many career fields who are influential in their communities. Include a cross-section of individuals from educational facilities, business firms, labor and religious organizations, and social service agencies. Also, include former clients who understand your program's services. Keep the number of board members within manageable limits.

After establishing your advisory board, hold regularly scheduled meetings to discuss employment leads, vocational skills training, and continuing education alternatives for your program's clients. During the time between meetings, keep your advisory board informed of your program's developments and needs by newsletter or personal correspondence. A good working relationship with your advisory board can be a valuable asset to your ABE/GED program. Why not get started on establishing your Employment Assistance Advisory Board now?

ACCOUNTABILITY: WHERE TO START

How do you establish accountability practices (guidelines) that measure your performance on the job? The first step is to speak with your employer about your responsibilities. Then, talk with your coworkers about how your job responsibilities relate to their work assignments. Finally, continue interacting with these individuals to increase the quality of your work and the company's product or service.

Here are a few questions that employees can ask themselves:

- Do I have a clear understanding of what my supervisor expects me to do?
- How do my responsibilities relate to the responsibilities of my coworkers?
- Have I completed my assigned duties to the best of my abilities? (Be honest with yourself.)
- If I run into difficulties or have questions, do I talk with my supervisor and/or coworkers?
- If I have found better ways to complete my tasks, have I shared these new ways with others so they can understand or benefit from my ideas?

These same questions can be used by adult education students who wish to be accountable for their classroom work. Simply substitute certain words for others. *For example, if I run into difficulties or have questions, do I talk to my instructor or fellow students?*

MANAGING ON-THE-JOB RESPONSIBILITIES

In the changing business environment, employers value employees who can assume more on-the-job responsibilities. Increased duties mean increased accountabilities. Accountabilities are the action steps employees take to finish a task. The methods of measuring those action steps are also forms of accountability. If employees understand accountability in today's workplace, they can become highly organized and greatly contribute to the success of the organization.

For example, if an employee is responsible for assembling a piece of machinery and having it completed by a certain time, the many steps and actions taken to finish the job are a part of being accountable. The employee has to take proper measurements, use correct parts, communicate with co-workers, and make certain the machine meets customer standards.

In order to meet customer and company standards, employees work with time schedules. Keeping a record of daily activities and having a calendar that lists assignments and deadlines are important accountability measurement tools. Employees need written records (notes, signatures, updates, etc.) that report how and when all assignments were carried out.

When employers establish accountability practices, they are placing trust in the employees' knowledge, skill, and judgement. Employers know that accountability practices can lead to quality products, increased productivity, motivated employees, and an overall understanding of company operations. Employees like knowing what is expected of them and how they can be a part of the cooperative work environment.

Being accountable means being responsible, and accountabilities are the tools employees need to understand, to complete, and to evaluate on-the-job responsibilities. The key to using accountability in the workplace begins with asking questions (refer to sidebar) and establishing an effective work plan.

FEBRUARY 1990

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	Check on date for February's company meeting			1 Order Supplies 555-7178	2	3
4	5 Mr. Goode called	6 PASSAGE article due	7 Call B. Mangie 555-1378	8	9 Vacation Day	10

STUDENTaccesspage

WORKPLACE LITERACY SURVEY

The Midland Center, Inc. and its Volunteers In Service To America (VISTA) Literacy Corps need your help. We are interested in your opinions on the topic of Workplace Literacy. We thank you for answering the following questions!

DIRECTIONS: Place a number one (1) next to the description that best describes you. If another category also describes you, place a number two (2) in front of that description. Please do not number further.

____ Business Owner
____ Business Manager
____ Part-time Employee
____ Full-time Employee
____ Part-time Adult Student
____ Full-time Adult Student
____ Adult Education Administrator
____ Adult Education Teacher
____ Guidance Counselor
____ Volunteer Tutor
____Other(Explain:_____
_____)

QUESTIONS 1-3 (CHECK ONE RESPONSE)

1. SHOULD EMPLOYERS EVALUATE A JOB CANDIDATE'S MATH, READING, AND WRITING ABILITIES AS THEY RELATE TO THE JOB?

A._____ YES! Employers should have knowledge about a potential employee's job-related reading, writing, and math skills.

B._____ NO! Potential employees with the proper job qualifications, references, and education/work history have already demonstrated their ability to read, write, and calculate.

C._____OTHER(List:_____
_____
_____)

2. SHOULD COMPANIES OFFER JOB-RELATED READING, WRITING, OR MATH SKILLS TRAINING TO EXISTING EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE A NEED FOR OR INTEREST IN THESE SKILLS?

A._____ YES! Through company-sponsored education/training programs at the worksite on company and/or worker's own time.

B._____ YES! Through company-sponsored tuition reimbursement plans (company pays all or some of the costs) that permit employees to enroll in job-related courses.

C._____ NO! Employees should accept the responsibility and cost for their own training and education.

D._____OTHER(List:_____
_____
_____)

3. IS THERE A LINK BETWEEN A WORKER'S BASIC SKILLS (READING, WRITING, AND MATH) AND HIS/HER JOB PERFORMANCE?

A._____ YES! Workers who acquire basic academic skills are more likely to perform well on the job.

B._____ NO! Workers who lack basic academic skills are just as likely to perform well on the job.

C._____OTHER(List:_____
_____
_____)

4. WHY <u>DON'T</u> COMPANIES INVEST IN BASIC SKILLS PROGRAMS IN READING/WRITING/MATH?

(RANK: 1=MOST IMPORTANT to 5=LEAST IMPORTANT)

_____ Because a lack of information exists on workplace basic skills programs.

_____ Because employers view the "workplace literacy" problem as the latest fad, and they are not convinced that job-related basic education programs make a difference in the workplace.

_____ Because scheduling difficulties and time and cost factors are considerable and outweigh the benefits of offering such training programs.

_____ Because worker interest and commitment are not always guaranteed. Employees may find these programs to be threatening to their jobs, as well as a source of embarrassment to them.

_____ Because employers do not feel that the current workforce lacks the basic skills.

5. WHY <u>DO</u> COMPANIES INVEST IN JOB-RELATED READING, MATH, AND WRITING INSTRUCTION FOR EMPLOYEES?

(RANK: 1=MOST IMPORTANT to 3=LEAST IMPORTANT)

_____ Health and safety issues are becoming more important because of changes in company, state, and federal regulations. Companies need employees to understand written/verbal communications which affect their health and safety on the job.

_____ Employees can become more prepared to work towards improvements in productivity, quality, competitiveness, performance, and labor-management cooperation by enrolling in basic skills programs.

_____ Companies can better prepare workers for rapid changes in technology in the workplace by offering basic skills programs.

6. WHAT ASSURANCES WOULD <u>EMPLOYERS</u> NEED TO HAVE BEFORE THEY OFFERED A WORKPLACE LITERACY PROGRAM?

(RANK FACTORS 1 THROUGH 8 THAT ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN SETTING UP A PROGRAM WITH 1=MOST IMPORTANT to 8=LEAST IMPORTANT.)

_____ Manageable cost and time factors
_____ Management's support of the program
_____ Relevance to the job/s
_____ Labor's support of the program
_____ Management and labor input in the design of program
_____ Instruction offered by current employees
_____ Confidentiality for the participants
_____ Instruction offered by outside consultants

7. WHAT ASSURANCES WOULD <u>EMPLOYEES</u> NEED TO HAVE BEFORE THEY PARTICIPATED IN A WORKPLACE LITERACY PROGRAM?

(RANK FACTORS 1 THROUGH 8 THAT ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN SETTING UP A PROGRAM WITH 1=MOST IMPORTANT to 8=LEAST IMPORTANT.)

_____ Manageable cost and time factors
_____ Management's support of the program
_____ Relevance to the job/s
_____ Labor's support of the program
_____ Management and labor input in the design of program
_____ Instruction offered by current employees
_____ Confidentiality for the participants
_____ Instruction offered by outside consultants

Thank you for completing this survey!

WORKPLACE TERMS

Technical Training - Specialized skills in crafts or business. Knowledge and experience in a particular career field. Examples: Auto mechanics, computer progammmers/operators, and electronic repairmen have this type of training.

Technological Changes - Advanced methods of performing certain tasks or adoption of new and efficient procedures for obtaining desired results. Example: Many secretaries now use a computer or word processor instead of a typewriter to create documents.

Internship/externship - A limited time period of practicing skills learned through specialized training. Usually a requirement for obtaining final grades and/or graduation from a particular school. Examples: Soon-to-be graduates from medical schools and reservationists from business schools are often required to take an intership or externship.

Apprenticeship - This is a formal and on-the-job training procedure. A novice is under the close supervision of a person with extensive experience and knowledge in a particular craft or profession. The novice must pass certain tests before earning an elevated position. Example: An apprentice bricklayer must pass tests on how to lay various kinds of bricks using many types of mortar in a given time limit before being certified as a bricklayer.

Multi-craft Training - Usually found in manufacturing and construction industries. Work crews are trained to perform the tasks that used to be delegated to specialized groups of employees. Example: A construction crew builds its scaffolding, lays brick, installs plumbing, and does the painting that used to be done by separate crews of carpenters, bricklayers, plumbers, and painters.

EMPLOYEE MORALE

HUMOR IN THE WORKPLACE

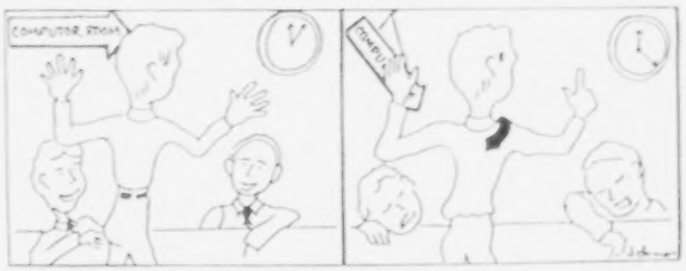
According to humor consultant Malcolm Kushner, president of Malcolm Kushner and Associates (Santa Cruz, CA), "Humor is a light-hearted attitude coupled with common sense." To quote Mr. Kushner again, "Humor creates a bond of unity that encourages team thinking." The ability to function as a unified work force increases the morale and motivation of each team member. Humor can serve to relax the atmosphere without lowering acceptable standards of performance.

So how do we use humor effectively? It's easy -- just smile, laugh, and swap stories. "Service with a smile" is a common saying that produces positive results when practiced on customers and coworkers. "Laugh and the world laughs with you..." is another good saying that contains wisdom. Good natured smiles and laughs are contagious, relax tensions, and unite individuals in a spirit of teamwork.

"Everyone has at least one personal anecdote," insists Mr. Kushner, and he adds that, "...life can just be funny sometimes." Swapping funny personal stories can bond team members in mutual trust of each other, because each is sharing something about himself/herself.

For all of its positive features and notable results, humor can produce just the opposite effects if used inappropriately. Always be conservative in your humor; if there is a chance that someone may be offended by a joke you want to tell, do not deliver the joke. Keep in mind that there is a difference between sharing a few laughs about a funny story and making fun of someone.

"Humor is like an American Express card -- you should never leave home without it," states Mr. Kushner. Using good humor on the job is easy if you smile often, share a few funny stories, and avoid telling offensive jokes. By so doing, you will be using humor as a spice to bring out the best in yourself and those around you for happy work days.



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HELP BUILD OUR INFORMATION EXCHANGE NETWORK

*areas from which PASSAGE has received guest articles and/or reader feedback

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PASSAGE

"Your workplace and job skills information newsletter"

January 1990

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PASSAGE

"YOUR WORKPLACE AND JOB SKILLS INFORMATION NEWSLETTER" FEB. 1990

BOOKS TO HELP YOU WITH YOUR JOB SEARCH

WHAT COLOR IS YOUR PARACHUTE?, 1988, Richard Nelson Bolles, Ten Speed Press, Berkeley, CA 94707. (New editions updated yearly.) A handy do-it-yourself guide to career exploration and job seeking. Suggested and respected by all professionals in the employment field.

WISHCRAFT - HOW TO GET WHAT YOU REALLY WANT, 1979, Barbara Sher, Ballantine Books, NY. A comprehensive and humorous, yet practical, guide to those who are serious about making their dreams come true.

THE BEST OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT, 1988, Cabot L. Jaffee, published for American Society for Training and Development. Write to ASTD Publishing Service, P.O. Box 4856, Hampden Station, Baltimore, MD 21211, or call (703) 683-8129. A managerial perspective on career development and its role in organizations today.

SUPER JOB SEARCH, Peter K. Studner, 1988, published for Crisp Publications, Inc., 95 First Street, Los Altos, CA 94022 or call (415) 949-4888. A best-selling book featuring a seven-day plan for becoming an outstanding job candidate.

WHO'S HIRING WHO, Richard Lathrop, 1986, Ten Speed Press, Berkeley, CA 94707. An interesting look at career possibilities, job seeking strategies, and employment trends.

** These books can be found in your local library or bookstore.*

INVESTING IN OLDER WORKERS

PREPARING FOR THE YEAR 2000

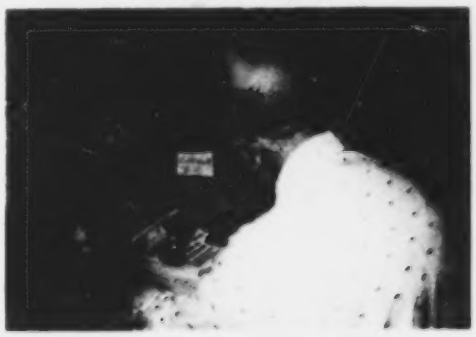
Carol Kleiman, columnist for the Chicago Tribune, writes that companies can profit from retraining their older workers, and her research indicates that companies will have to train older workers as fewer younger people enter the labor market.

For example, in the year 2000, the average worker will be thirty-nine (39) years old. Ms. Kleiman found this fact to be a problem for many organizations because of existing attitudes of "you cannot teach old dogs new tricks" or older workers resist change.

According to Ms. Kleiman, this negative viewpoint on the part of companies will affect their available labor pool for the year 2000. She suggests that companies take a look at other employers who are reporting the good news about investments in older worker retraining programs. These programs prove that many negative viewpoints concerning older workers are not justified. Studies have shown that people of all ages, not just older workers, are equally intimidated by changes in the workplace.

The truth is older adults can be a good investment for employers. Because of their experience, older workers often have more confidence in their abilities and talents, and they know how to work around their personal limitations. Also,

(Continued on Page 2)



WHAT DOES THAT PERSON DO FOR A LIVING?

Here is a brief list of interesting job titles that may not be familiar to most people. See how many you know; maybe you might be interested in finding out more about one of these positions.

COMMISSION AGENT: a sales person who makes money based on the number of products or services that he/she sells

ELECTROLOGIST: an individual who removes unwanted body hair by destroying hair roots with an electrified needle

GLAZIER: a person whose work involves cutting glass and setting it in windows

STENOGRAPHER: an individual who writes or types dictation, testimony, etc. in shorthand

STATISTICIAN: a person who analyzes data (numbers) to project trends or provide information about a subject

PHOTOGRAMMETRIST: a person who takes aerial photographs, surveys, and measurements for the purpose of map making

LITHOGRAPHIC PRESS OPERATOR: an individual who operates a printing machine for a newspaper, magazine, or commercial print shop

MIXOLOGIST: a bartender

AUDIOLOGIST: a person who evaluates or rehabilitates those who have hearing defects

(Continued from Page 1)

their turnover rate is much lower than younger workers who are uncertain of their long-term plans.

To address the fears about changes in the workplace, Raymond W. Zukowski, a manager for Aerospace Electronic Systems of General Electric Company in New York, sponsored a kickoff meeting to explain the benefits of retraining programs. He emphasized that Aerospace Electronic Systems' technical renewal program is working because the employees, including older workers, understand that their jobs are not being threatened but are being enhanced through the attainment of new skills. Also, other employers such as banking companies and school districts are following the same path as Aerospace Electronic Systems and are retraining their older workers.

In view of the above examples, PASSAGE believes that older workers, like older adult education students, need to be valued for their willingness to accept change, to take on increased responsibilities, and to make outstanding contributions to the workforce now and in the year 2000.

EMPLOYEE OPINION ARTICLE

WHAT ACADEMIC SKILLS ARE USED IN THE WORKPLACE?

In a previous issue, PASSAGE featured an article on the practice of job shadowing as a way to learn more about career fields that interest you. To assist you further with your career decisions, we interviewed individuals from ten different occupations to discover how important reading, math, writing, and speaking are in fulfulling their daily job responsibilities.

In the interview, we asked them to prioritize (1 = most important skill to 5 = least used skill) the following on-the-job basic academic skills:

Reading Skills: comprehending written materials that are used in the workplace such as manuals and company-related manuscripts

Verbal Communication: talking to customers and co-workers or to groups of people

Math Skills: taking inventory and/or calculating daily sales figures

Written Communication: writing memos or reports

Other (Optional)

These responses provide helpful information for adult students interested in learning more about different career fields; therefore, if you plan to enter the job market or attend college, it is to your advantage to seek out similar information by conducting your own research on the occupations that interest you.

(Continued on Page 3)

SAMPLER OF STARTING WAGE SCALES

Here is a small sample of starting wages from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, Bureau of Research & Statistics.

This sample list, although brief, covers a broad area of employment such as medical, business, service, and computer fields. Of course, the starting wage scales in your area for the same or similar occupations may vary.

For a more comprehensive list of starting wage scales, write to: **PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRY, LABOR MARKET ANALYSIS SECTION**, 300 Liberty Avenue, Room 1301, Pittsburgh, PA 15222.

Sample List

OCCUPATION	STARTING HOURLY RATE
Mechanic, diesel	$ 8.12
Word Processor	7.85
Computer Operator	6.22
Mechanic, Automotive	6.05
Clerk, General Office	5.76
Typist	5.39
Nurse Aide/Orderly	4.98
Guard/Doorkeeper	4.85
Bank Teller	4.54
Clerk, Sales	3.61
Host/Hostess, Restaurant	3.53
Waiter/Waitress (Not including tips)	2.24

(Continued from Page 2)

Banking - Customer Service Rep.

1 Verbal Communication
2 Written Communication
3 Math Skills
5 Reading Skills
4 Other (Telephone Skills)

Banking - Teller

2 Verbal Communication
3 Written Communication
1 Math Skills
4 Reading Skills
5 Other (Telephone Skills)

Secretary

1 Verbal Communication
2 Written Communication
5 Math Skills
3 Reading Skills
4 Other (Word Processing)

Public Relations

1 Verbal Communication
2 Written Communication
5 Math Skills
3 Reading Skills
4 Other (Knowledge of Computers)

Accountant

2 Verbal Communication
4 Written Communication
1 Math Skills
3 Reading Skills

Television Productions (Editor)

1 Verbal Communication
3 Written Communication
5 Math Skills
4 Reading Skills
2 Other (Equipment Set-up and Operation)

Mechanical Engineer

4 Verbal Communication
3 Written Communication
1 Math Skills
2 Reading Skills

Salesperson

1 Verbal Communication
3 Written Communication
2 Math Skills
4 Reading Skills

Airplane Mechanic

2 Verbal Communication
3 Written Communication
4 Math Skills
1 Reading Skills

Drafting

4 Verbal Communication
3 Written Communication
1 Math Skills
2 Reading Skills

* *Even though some skills appear to be more important than others (this varies depending on the job), a majority of the people who were interviewed stressed that having a good understanding of all basic academic skills can only improve your chances for on-the-job growth and development.*

WORKPLACE TERMS PART II

TELECOMMUNICATION - Any activity requiring the use of telephone lines for voice and/or data transmission person to person or site to site. Examples include telephones (voice), FAX machines (facsimile; voice and printed data), and Modems (modulationdemodulation; computer to computer data transmissions).

MASS COMMUNICATION - The general distribution of information by the use of such mediums as radio, TV, magazines, and newspapers. An example would include news reports broadcasted from TV and radio stations or printed in newspapers.

DISLOCATED/DISPLACED WORKERS - Employees whose jobs no longer exist because of a plant shutdown or a job being phased out by the employer. Examples may include steelworkers from a closed steel mill or leather crafters from a company switching to vinyl for its products.

LABOR-POOL - A collective body of employees with various skills working for one company or a company department. An example of this would be employees in the purchasing department--secretaries, accountants, clerks, and inspectors.

ESOP - Employee Stock Ownership Plan is a plan designed to give employees an ownership share in the company. The plan allows employees to benefit personally as the company profits and as company stock increase in value.

RESTRUCTURING - The process of either implementing a reorganization of the company or reorganization of a certain department for increased efficiency and less cost. For example, a company may restructure by selling a marginally profitable subdivision to gain capital for building another branch office or to pay off debts.

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

UNDERSTANDING YOURSELF AND YOUR ABILITIES

Many students often look for a step-by-step recipe for choosing a training or educational program that can guarantee employment. Unfortunately, there is no established recipe for success. There are, however, strategies that can make this time-consuming task more manageable.

For instance, you should be able to answer the following questions before choosing a program :

1) **Who am I?** What skills, talents, interests, abilities, and personality traits do I possess? These characteristics can be explored by taking aptitude and interest tests at your local college or job center or by reading a career hunter's book such as The Professional Job Changing System, Robert Jameson Gerberg, author.

2) **How can I benefit most from who I am?** What type of training will complement my existing strengths? Examine several ideas and training possibilities listing the advantages/disadvantages. Which offers the greatest gains? Try being creative and nontraditional but still practical.

3) **What goals must I set for myself, and how can I achieve these goals?** After the research and planning stages, make a commitment to carry out your goals. Acting on your goals is the most important stage.

An honest evaluation of yourself and your situation (e.g., barriers with relocation, raising children, low income, lack of transportation) is critical to success in both choosing and completing a training program. Once a true-to-self portrait is drawn, make a list of the types of careers that would fit your background and needs. You can narrow your choices simply by networking (utilizing family, friends, and other contacts) and gathering information from libraries and/or job centers.

Even though selecting an appropriate career is an exhausting process, the pressure can be minimized by carefully organizing your career/training search. Commit yourself to the career preparation process and give yourself time to research/gather information (but not so much time that you will end up procrastinating). Listen to what others have to say to help you make an informed and intelligent career/training decision.

Never forget that only you can decide for yourself what you want to do. Set yourself up for success by covering all angles

(Continued on Page 6)

STUDENTaccesspage Focus: Informational Interviews

Introduction: There are many ways to learn about different careers and occupations which interest you. One effective research tool is the informational interview. You can take your career development questions to employees who are more than willing to share job-related information with you.

Directions: Choose no less than three individuals to interview who work in a career field that interests you. Preferably, you should interview employees who work at different companies because you will need to compare their responses and opinions before making your conclusions. .Ask the following questions which were designed to provide you with important information. Add other questions should you wish to expand your understanding of a particular occupation. Record their responses to the following questions on another sheet of paper.

Name of Person Being Interviewed:

Title (if applicable):

Place of Employment:

Length of Employment:

1. What do you like about your work? What part of your job gives you the most satisfaction?

2. Do you dislike any part of your work? What? Why?

3. How did you choose this particular career/occupation?

4. What training and/or education have you completed in preparation for this career/occupation?

5. Do you have to continue your training/education while on the job?

6. Do your job responsibilities require that you work alone, work with others, or work with both?

7. Does your job/occupation offer opportunities for advancement (promotion) within the company? If yes, how? If no, why not?

8. What advice would you give to someone like me who is interested in doing similar work?

Add additional questions here:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Remember to thank the persons being interviewed for their time and information. Review their responses and draw some conclusions about what they have shared with you. Write down your conclusions emphasizing what you have learned that is new and how you feel about this new information.

Use this master for photo copying.

DECLINING JOB OCCUPATIONS

In the next issue of PASSAGE, we will highlight occupation areas that contain the fastest growth rates and that have the most openings. But what about those occupations that will be in decreasing demand? Here is a list of the fastest declining occupations measured from 1984 through 1995 as reported by the USA TODAY publication group.

Sample List

OCCUPATION	PERCENT CHANGE IN EMPLOYMENT
Stenographers	-40.3
Shoe sewing machine operators	-31.3
Railroad brake signal, and switch operators	-26.4
Railcar repairers	-22.3
Furnace, kiln, or kettle operators and tenders	-20.9
Shoe and leather workers and repairers	-18.6
Private household workers	-18.3
Station installers and repairers, telephone	-17.4
Sewing machine operators, garment	-16.7
Textile machine operators tenders, setters, and set-up operators, winding	-15.7

NOTE: Includes only detailed occupations with 1984 employment of 25,000 or more. Data for 1995 are based on moderate-growth projections.

(Continued from Page 4)

Self-scoring career guidebooks are available to adult learners who wish to assess their vocational interests and abilities

before you enroll in a program. Carefully examine your options, and pick a field that intrigues you. Choose a curriculum that you are confident you can master, and select a program which agrees with your personal responsibilities and limitations. Above all, select a program that you are really enthusiastic about to weather the worst of storms.

SUCCESS STORY

MAKING YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE: HARD WORK AND DEDICATION

Every now and then we read or hear of people who have risen above adversities to achieve a measure of success. Evelyn Hernandez of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, is such a person. PASSAGE had the pleasure of interviewing Evelyn to share her story with other ABE/GED students. Evelyn is an ABE/GED graduate now employed by the Lancaster General Hospital in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, as a full-time EKG (Electrocardiogram) Technician. Evelyn's work duties are to administer EKG tests, type up EKG reports, and prepare billing charges for EKG patients.

PASSAGE: Where did you attend GED classes, Evelyn?

EVELYN: I went to the Adult Enrichment Center in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Actually, I attended classes there twice.

PASSAGE: Twice? Would you explain that for us, please?

EVELYN: Well, to begin with, I was working as a sales clerk at a department store when I first entered the GED program. Then I got a better job as a laborer in a toy factory, so I dropped out of GED. But I could not accept being a laborer all my life, and I realized that I needed my GED to improve myself; therefore, I returned to GED classes to earn my diploma. Soon after returning to GED, I enrolled in Brownstown Vocational/Technological School in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, for a course in Medical Terminology.

(Continued on Page 7)

NEWSLETTER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

Would your organization like to design, publish, and distribute an adult education newsletter? The PASSAGE Staff at The Midland Center, Inc. and its Volunteers In Service To America Literacy Corps will offer a twelve hour "Newsletter Planning and Development Workshop" on April 23 and 24, 1990.

The workshop will focus on:

- identifying topics of interest
- establishing a focus
- choosing an editorial team
- building an information network
- organizing a distribution plan

Enrollments will be limited to the first fifteen individuals who make reservations; therefore, no more than two individuals per organization, please. Workshop participants will be responsible for their own meal expenses; however, host homes will be provided for those traveling long distances. If interested, complete the registration form and return it to the address listed below.

(Continued from Page 6)

PASSAGE: Which subjects in your GED course helped to make your Medical Terminology course easier to learn?

EVELYN: English. Math is very important, but working with the English language is essential in my line of work. Part of my job involves typing up EKG reports; therefore, a good command of English grammar is a must.

PASSAGE: How did your GED experience train you to use problem-solving skills?

EVELYN: In our GED class, we read stories of everyday problems. We would create a logical structure of these problems for cause and effect. Then, we would write down our findings and solutions in a structured format. This thinking and writing in logical sequence developed my concentration. In fact, I was placed in the top 3% of my GED class.

PASSAGE: How did you manage to cope with the demand for study time while taking your GED lessons and Medical Terminology course at the same time?

EVELYN: I did not put up barriers for myself. (One can always find excuses for not studying.) I wanted to achieve my goals for a better future, so I dismissed the temptations to put off my study time. I realized the only time I have is now, and I better make good use of it; in fact, I did something every day to bring me closer to my goals.

PASSAGE: What advice do you have for GED students who may desire to enter the medical field?

EVELYN: Be honest with yourself, and ask why you decided to take a GED course. Determine what you want to do with your life, and set realistic goals for yourself to achieve. If you want to enter the medical field, ask yourself "Why?" Do not do it just for money. Do it for a career -- your life's work. Develop real compassion for others, and prepare to devote regular study time everyday toward your goals. Know where you want to be in life, and sacrifice to get there. Once you achieve your goals, those sacrificed social times will be meaningless to you in comparison to your success and personal fulfillment.

NEWSLETTER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP REGISTRATION

Name Of Organization_____

_____

Address_____

_____

Phone Number_____

Workshop Participant(s)_____

_____

Check one:

_____Do not need overnight housing; will travel.

_____Do need overnight housing; assign host home.

MAIL TO: The Midland Center, Inc.
617 Midland Avenue
Midland, Pennsylvania 15059
Attention: PASSAGE STAFF
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This newsletter was produced internally by TMCI.

1-800-345-5443 (PA Toll Free)

HELP BUILD OUR INFORMATION EXCHANGE NETWORK!

*areas from which PASSAGE has received guest articles and/or reader feedback

The activity which is the subject of this publication was supported in part by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Pennsylvania Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the Pennsylvania Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Education should be inferred.

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PASSAGE

"Your workplace and job skills information newsletter"

February 1990

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PASSAGE

"YOUR WORKPLACE AND JOB SKILLS INFORMATION NEWSLETTER" MAR. 1990

PASSAGE UPDATE

- A sincere thank you to our readers who responded to the Workplace Literacy Survey in PASSAGE's January 1990 issue. We will report the findings of the survey in a special issue of PASSAGE which will be distributed in June of this year.
- PASSAGE is always interested in individuals and programs that assist adult basic education practitioners, volunteers, and students with workplace and job skills information having state wide application. Contact us with your ideas and information. We welcome your participation.
- Feedback is an important criterion for evaluating the effectiveness of PASSAGE. We have been motivated by the number of congratulatory phone calls and letters to our editorial staff. To further evaluate the newsletter, we are planning to survey our readers during the month of April to solicit their ideas on how PASSAGE can continue to serve their needs.

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JOBS FOR A NEW DECADE

SERVICE IS THE NAME OF THE GAME

A new decade has begun, and it holds exciting opportunities for employment in the service industry. A recent survey of Pennsylvania's job market trends by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry indicates that the service industry is now the leader in occupations with the fastest growth rates and occupations with the most openings for the 1990s. These service occupations will be in the business, medical, educational, social, computer-related, and other fields.

Of the fifteen fastest growing service occupations, the top ranking occupation is for paralegal personnel (persons trained to aid lawyers but not licensed to practice law) with a growth rate of 68% per year. Number 15 on the list is for Medical Records Technicians at 35% per year. In between these two listings are occupations such as Medical Assistants (60%), Computer Programmers (56%), and Social Service Aides (39%), to name a few.

Of the top fifteen occupations with the most job openings, Maintenance/Custodial positions are at the top of the list; Pennsylvania will need just over 13,000 new workers per year in this field. Anchoring the bottom of this list are Accountants and Auditors at the rate of 2,000 to 3,000 new openings per year. Others on the list are General Office Clerks (5,741), Registered Nurses (5,268), Truck Drivers (4,499), and Maintenance Repairers (2,426).

The majority of these service jobs require at least a GED/High School diploma while many require a certificate from a skills training/vocational school or an associate or a bachelor degree from a college. These requirements reflect the increasingly important role education is playing in our technological society. Thus, a job seeker looking for employment in the service industry can greatly increase his/her opportunities for a promising career by continuing his/her education.

(Continued on page 2)

ARMED SERVICES VOCATIONAL APTITUDE BATTERY (ASVAB)

What is the ASVAB?

The ASVAB is a test to determine an enlistee's skills and abilities. Along with an enlistee's physical test results, the military uses the ASVAB to determine which jobs match the abilities and skills of the enlistee.

What is on the ASVAB?

The ASVAB includes:

- general math with some algebra and geometry.
- some general math sections which are timed for speed and accuracy.
- English composition, reading comprehension, and word association questions.
- questions on naming and recognizing hand tools, power tools, machine parts, motor parts, nuts and bolts, screws, and nails.

The entire ASVAB takes about two and one-half to three hours to complete. When completed, the recruiter and you will have a good idea of your current knowledge, skills, and abilities. At this point, the recruiter will discuss job options that match your abilities.

(Continued from page 1)

Whether measured by fastest growth or by number of new job openings, the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry's study reveals that the service industry is where the jobs are now and where they will be during the 1990s.

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

THE ARMED FORCES AS AN ALTERNATIVE

The Armed Forces offers enlistees valuable opportunities to train and work in jobs similar to those found in civilian employment. There are numerous career fields in the military that should appeal to almost everyone's interests, abilities, and talents. Many employment areas such as administration, construction, computer technology, medical practice, food preparation, and entertainment are offered. In addition, on-the-job experience gained in the Armed Forces can be transferred to civilian jobs where job experience is strongly desired. All of these positive employment features make the Armed Forces an attractive alternative to seeking jobs in the private sector.

For example, the military is one of the largest users of state-of-the-art computer equipment. No doubt a few years of experience in this area will give an individual a noticeable advantage over many job seekers who have no hands-on work experience. If being a chef, a nurse, or an auto mechanic is more to your liking, the Armed Forces offers extensive training in these areas as well. Law enforcement is another area where many enlistees receive training and experience to become policemen, detectives, and private investigators.

These are just a few of the more than 250 career possibilities being offered to enlistees in the Armed Forces today. Besides on-the-job skills training, there is the opportunity to further one's education by taking college courses through military assistance programs. This additional learning and experience can lead to promotions in rank with increases in pay and privileges. If the Armed Forces appeals to you as an alternative to looking for civilian employment, talk to your local recruiter or call the numbers on the next page to discuss your career plans with an Armed Forces representative.

As a final note, each branch of the military has its own rules for GED graduates who desire to enlist. The current rules and information can be found in the accompanying sidebars. These rules change from time to time according to military

(Continued on page 3)

ENLISTMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR GED GRADUATES

ARMY

Enlistment period: October 1, 1990 through January 1, 1991; however, during this period, this enlistment period may close at any time.

Required ASVAB score: Minimum of 50

Enlistment age: 17 through 34

MARINE CORPS

Enlistment period: The Marines will take approximately 100 GED graduates during 1990 from the State of Pennsylvania.

Required ASVAB score: Minimum of 50

Enlistment age: 17 through 28

AIR FORCE

Enlistment period: October 1, 1990 through October 6, 1991

Required ASVAB score: Over 50

Note: Fifteen college credits is considered the equivalent of a high school diploma for GED graduates, and one may apply throughout the year if they have these credits.

Enlistment age: 17 through 27

NAVY

Enlistment period: All of 1990; Enlistment acceptance for 1991 may change.

Required ASVAB score: Minimum of 50

Enlistment age: 17 through 35

COAST GUARD

Enlistment period: Year round

Required ASVAB score: Minimum of 40

Enlistment age: 17 through 27

AIR/ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Enlistment period: Year round

Required ASVAB score: 31

Enlistment age: 17 through 35

** This information was provided by area recruiters and is subject to change at any time.*

(Continued from page 2)

needs; therefore, we **emphasize** that you check with your local recruiter to see what changes may have taken place that could affect your enlistment and career objectives.

ARMY -- 1-800-USA-ARMY
NAVY -- 1-800-327-NAVY
MARINE CORPS -- 1-800-423-2600
COAST GUARD -- 1-800-424-8883
AIR FORCE -- 1-800-423-8723
AIR/ARMY NATIONAL GUARD -- 1-800-932-4840

A BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS

THE MACHINIST TRADE

PASSAGE interviewed Al Roman, owner of Roman's Precision Machine Shop in Vanport, Pennsylvania, to gather information for our readers about the machinist trade. Mr. Roman has been a machinist for almost a quarter of a century, and the quality work turned out by his shop is impressive.

A machinist demonstrating the skills of the trade

When we asked Mr. Roman what it took to be a good machinist, without hesitation, he replied, "Good machinists will make this trade their life's work and not just a job. They must be willing to learn everything they can of this trade and to always take pride in their work."

As Mr. Roman escorted us on a tour of his shop, he led us from machine to machine explaining how each one works and showing us samples of products that were created and/or refined at his shop. Some of these products we recognized as motor parts, electric switch box components, clipboard hardware, and even potato peelers. Many of these products are specialized projects other companies are developing. Typically, Mr. Roman's shop gets the blueprint for a product, examines the product's function and design, and then creates the product. Eventually, a final model of the product is completed to exact specifications and is mass produced by a manufacturer.

(Continued on page 4)

SKILLS MACHINISTS USE

Nearly everytime a metal component (tool or machine) is designed, a machinist plays an important role in making that product become a reality.

In order to complete a job, a machinist must be precise in his/her judgements as well as the measurements that are needed to:

- set up and operate machine tools (organizational and eye-hand coordination skills)
- fit and assemble parts to make or repair mechanisms, tools, or machines (eye-hand coordination skills)
- apply knowledge of mechanical principles (decision-making skills)
- use shop mathematics (number operation and chart reading skills)
- be familiar with metal properties (physics/chemistry skills)
- understand blueprints (math, reading, and mechanical skills)
- layout machining procedures (organizational, math, and reading skills)
- plan sequence of operations (organizational skills)

(Continued from page 3)

When asked what a machinist has to know to perform work on all of these products, Mr. Roman answered, "A machinist must be able to read blueprints and to visualize the correct steps necessary to create the finished product." Some of these "steps" include machining metal to precise shapes, taking measurements to the thousandths of an inch, and knowing which machine to use and why. A knowledge of metals is essential too. Preplanning and setting up correct procedures play a major role in turning out a quality product; "Machinists do the thinking, and machines do the work," stated Mr. Roman.

After examining his precision products, we asked Mr. Roman about specific academic skills needed in the machinist trade. "We have charts for just about every type of measuring work we do, and a good understanding and proficient use of general math and algebra are needed to comprehend and use these measuring charts," he replied. Mr. Roman added that reading is important, too, for studying the manuals on machine operation and small tool use.

With our tour at an end, we asked Mr. Roman for his suggestions on how a GED graduate can enter the machinist trade, how long it takes to become a machinist, how much they can earn, and what the demand is for machinist services. Mr. Roman thought for a moment and answered, "A public vocational-technical school or private trade school should be their first step. From there, it takes about four years of on-the-job training and experience to become a journeyman machinist (a skilled tradesman). As for wages, beginners can earn around $7.00 per hour while journeyman machinists can make up to $21.00 per hour in the right industry and location. The demand for skilled machinists is always higher than the number of tradesmen available."

There are approximately 74 vocational-technical and trade schools in Pennsylvania, and most of them offer training in the machinist trade. Perhaps you would like to look into this interesting area of employment. If so, contact your local vocational technical or trade school for additional information on this fascinating occupation.

THE PASSAGE INFORMATION EXCHANGE NETWORK

RESUME WRITING TIPS

Here are some suggestions to help you organize and write your resume.

- Be truthful; never include information that cannot be verified.
- Make certain all skills and accomplishments are stated briefly and clearly.
- Show what you have accomplished and how you can help the company.
- Check for spelling and grammatical errors, and have at least one other person proofread for mistakes.
- Prepare to write many rough drafts of your resume. It takes time and patience to get it right.
- Eliminate slang, technical jargon, and abbreviations.
- Avoid using repetitive phases such as responsible for..., duties included....
- Never include salary requirements.
- Use past tense action verbs to begin each action/responsibility statement (Completed 50 hours of training).
- Include a cover letter with your resume.

AN OUTLINE OF YOU AND YOUR ABILITIES

When preparing for your job search, having an organized, well-planned, and attractive resume to send to potential employers is essential. To help you with the task of creating an impressive resume, we will examine the resume's purpose, function, and design.

Basically, the resume is a written summary of your skills and qualifications. The four main functions of a resume are:

- to advertise you effectively to the employer
- to serve as a screening device for the employer
- to provide an outline for the interview
- to serve as a written reminder of you after the interview

The resume should provide information about your work experience (paid and nonpaid), education, and personal background. In other words, it should include who you are and what you have done. Keep in mind that your resume is a written representation of you, emphasizing your skills and abilities.

Because employers are busy people, a resume should typically be only one page in length. One page is all that it takes to spark an employer's interest. If you must continue to a second page, make certain that at least one-half of the second page contains information. A near empty second page will reveal a lack of organization and planning to the employers screening resumes.

Employers are less likely to pay close attention to a resume that consists of many pages. Remember, include only enough information (brief and clear statements) to encourage the employer to find out more about you at the interview.

An employer expects a resume to be attractive and easy to read. The copy you submit to an employer should be typed on a durable/quality grade of paper (white, ivory, or gray). Neatness counts; a resume that looks crowded and is difficult to scan in a short period of time is usually ignored.

Spend the time needed to write and to design an accurate, persuasive, and organized picture of your abilities. This effort will increase your chances of receiving job interviews. At the job interview, you can go into more detail about your skills, abilities, and how you can benefit the potential employer.

(Continued on page 7)

STUDENTaccesspage

Focus: Functional Resume

A functional resume is one of many types of resumes which job seekers use to find employment. The functional resume permits you to emphasize your skills and abilities whenever you have a limited work history or a long work history with one company. We will concentate on the functional resume; however, always research the different styles of resumes to find one that will best suit your needs.

The Greeting supplies your name, address, and phone number to the employer. There are several ways of formatting this information; however, it is to your best advantage to use a basic design that does not detract from the body of the resume.

A Career Objective indicates your strong interest in a particular job/position. This objective should be brief and comment on your qualifications. Caution: Never write a vague career objective which does not target any particular job (ie., Good worker seeks entry-level position with growing company). It is better to eliminate the career objective than to include one that does not have a focus.

Functional Skills describe what you can do on the job. After listing each of your skills, take the time to categorize them under specific titles such as management skills, organizational skills, mechanical skills, clerical skills, etc. If one skill seems to fit more than one category, make the decision to place it under the title which best describes how you use the skill.

The Work History Profile lists where you have learned, used, and refined your skills that are listed on the resume. Note: A special advantage of the functional resume is that it permits you to highlight skills and abilities acquired from non-paid work (volunteer) experience.

The Education Section often supports your functional and work history information. This is the place to list educational, career, workshop, and other seminar information that reinforces your qualifications for the job.

An Activities Summary presents any hobbies or interests that can be helpful in painting an overall picture of you as an individual. Sometimes, an employer "connects" with you because of a shared hobby or interest that you have in common with him/her.

The Reference Courtesy Statement invites the employer to ask you for professional and personal listings of individuals who can comment on your work habits, skills, and character.

Bernadette Rumancik
704 Payne Hill Road
Jefferson, PA 15025
(412) 555-2199

Career Objective: To secure a secretarial position which permits me to utilize my clerical, technical, and public contact skills.

CLERICAL SKILLS

- Typed proposals for project supervisor
- Corrected punctuation and grammar on proposal documents
- Assembled proposals into booklets to be mailed to foundations
- Filed all office correspondence for future reference
- Created letters and forms for business operations
- Kept accurate fiscal information on company expenditures

PUBLIC CONTACT SKILLS

- Designed presentation program for cosmetic product sales campaign
- Held monthly sales meetings to cover new product descriptions
- Increased sales quota by using assertive marketing plan
- Accepted new territories for product sales and distribution
- Used telemarketing techniques to initiate and to follow up on business contacts

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- Experienced in using word processing software
- Maintained client information using a computer database program
- Operated copy machine equipment of various types
- Computed financial information on calculator
- Organized bulk mailing procedures

WORK HISTORY

Sales Representative, ASHTON Products, 7007 Cosmetic Way, East Franklin, Pennsylvania 17098 (1989 to present)

Project Volunteer, The Midland Center, Inc., 617 Midland Avenue, Midland, Pennsylvania 15059 (1985 to present)

General Office Worker, ABC Corporation, 112 Oakdale Drive, Jefferson, Pennsylvania 15025 (1987-1989)

EDUCATION

Community Volunteer Training Program, The Midland Center, Inc.

Received certificate of accomplishment for twelve-hour word processing introduction course. (1988)

Continuing Education Department, Community College of Jefferson Area. Received certificates of completion for beginning typing and grammar brush-up courses. (1986)

General Education Diploma, Jefferson Evening Studies Program (1986)

ACTIVITIES

Avid reader of mystery novels

Office volunteer for nonprofit adult education program

Experienced in woodcarving for personal enjoyment

REFERENCES WILL BE FURNISHED UPON REQUEST.

BOOKS ON RESUME WRITING

Below is a brief list of popular books that may help you write a good resume. Check your bookstores and libraries for these and other helpful books on resume writing.

HOW TO WRITE BETTER RESUMES: Adele Lewis; Barron's Educational Series, Inc.

RESUME WRITING (A comprehensive how to do it guide): Burdette Bostwick; John Wiley & Sons.

THE RESUME BUILDER: John J. Komar; Follet Co.

JOB RESUMES: Joseph Israel Biegeleisen; Grosset Dunlop Co.

RESUME HANDBOOK: David Hizer; Robert Adams Co.

RESUMES THAT KNOCK 'EM DEAD: Martin John Yate; Bob Adams, Inc.

THE RESUME CATALOG (200 Damn Good Resumes): Yana Parker; Ten Speed Press.

RESUMES FOR BETTER JOBS: Lawrence D. Brennan, Ph.D., Stanley Strand, M.A., Edward C. Gruber, Ph.D.; Arco Publishing.

RESUME WRITING MADE EASY: Lola M. Oxford; Garsuch Sarisbrick Publishers.

POWER RESUMES: Ron Tepper; John Wiley & Sons.

RESUMES THAT GET JOBS: Jim Reed; Simon & Shuster, Inc.

(Continued from page 5)

Information about the functional style of resumes and helpful hints are included in the STUDENTaccesspage and in the accompanying sidebars. Also, see the December PASSAGE feature on cover letters.

CONTINUING EDUCATION TEACHERS

GO TO THE HEAD OF THE CLASS FOR EMPLOYMENT

Did you know that there is a steady demand for people to teach continuing education classes for adults? Also, did you know that a college degree is not always necessary for these jobs? PASSAGE interviewed a number of continuing education teachers to find out how their skills or talents helped them to become instructors. If you desire to be a teacher, here are two examples of how developed skills and talents can lead to employment in the teaching field.

Our first example is Mrs. Bee Bickerstaff. Mrs. Bickerstaff teaches flower arranging, and she acquired her skill from her father who had an intense interest in horticulture (the study of plants in a garden). As she grew up, Mrs. Bickerstaff increased her knowledge of flower arranging, and she began putting her skill to work by becoming active in flower arranging demonstrations at schools, clubs, and churches. Because of her fine ability, an official from the Community College of Beaver County (CCBC) offered her a job teaching flower arrangement at the college; this was the beginning of her serving eighteen years as a continuing education teacher at CCBC.

An example of Mr. Morelli's work

Raymond Morelli is another good example. About ten years ago, Mr. Morelli began learning woodcarving. After five years of practicing and learning, Mr. Morelli began teaching woodcarving at festivals in Eastern Ohio and Western Pennsylvania. One of his students from these festivals recommended him to

(Continued on last page)

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the Community College of Beaver County. Mr. Morelli was offered a teaching position at the college, and he accepted. He has been teaching woodcarving at CCBC for five years now. In addition, he continues to privately tutor woodcarving students outside of the classroom.

If you have a unique skill or talent to share with others, you may be able to become a continuing education teacher. There are numerous subjects in demand by colleges and trade schools such as dancing (especially clogging, round and square), basketry, weight lifting, cooking (special types), quilting, tennis, and even martial arts to name a few. In some cases, there may already be a demand for your skill or talent. Getting publicity and sharing your skill or talent are the best ways to find opportunities that could lead to employment.

Check with your local educational, civic, and religious groups to see if classes for your subject can be arranged. If so, make the best of your opportunity. As interest in your classes grows, your reputation for teaching a specialized course will increase in your community. Once you have established yourself as a capable instructor, the opportunity to become a paid continuing education teacher may come your way.

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PASSAGE

"Your workplace and job skills information newsletter"

March 1990

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PASSAGE

"YOUR WORKPLACE AND JOB SKILLS INFORMATION NEWSLETTER" APRIL 1990

FOCUS ON SELF-HELP PROGRAMS

In Pennsylvania, we are fortunate to have funds available that provide career and vocational guidance for single parents and homemakers who are facing personal, economic, social, and academic barriers to employment.

These self-help programs have produced a large number of success stories, and The Midland Center, Inc., along with Robert Morris College, is pleased to share one such success story with PASSAGE's readers (please see cover story, page one).

The Pennsylvania Department of Education, through its Vocational Bureau, funds several single parent-homemaker programs throughout the Commonwealth. Each program has its own curriculum and menu of services which can include, but is not limited to, information on assertiveness, budgeting, career options, job search techniques, and vocational guidance/training.

For more information contact: Dorothy Hershey, Single Parent-Homemaker Specialist, Pennsylvania Bureau of Vocational and Adult Education, 333 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333.

SINGLE PARENT-HOMEMAKER PROGRAMS

NEW BEGINNINGS AND HAPPY ENDINGS

Elizabeth Claytor is exceptionally proud of the fact that she pulled herself out of a difficult situation and took charge of her life. Presently employed in the radiology department of a western Pennsylvania hospital, Elizabeth is an inspiration to single parents and homemakers who are encountering obstacles to receiving vocational training and to obtaining employment opportunities.

PASSAGE: Describe for our readers how you felt before enrolling in a career guidance and vocational training program for single parents and homemakers.

MS. CLAYTOR: My dreams were completely shattered when my long-term marriage fell apart; I felt worthless, because my self-esteem was built around my marriage, home, and family. It was difficult being forty-four years old and losing the support I had known for a number of years.

PASSAGE: Tell us about the single parent-homemaker program you attended.

(Continued on page 2)

Elizabeth Claytor is an inspiration to all single parents and homemakers.

BUSINESS WRITING

The importance of business writing is often overlooked or underestimated by many individuals preparing to enter the workforce. Knowing how to get your message across in writing takes time and practice; however, it is a skill that everyone should obtain.

Here are some guidelines on how you can prepare effective business letters and reports:

- Determine the purpose of the letter or report.
- Research, gather, and organize all of the facts (use an outline to organize your ideas).
- Establish the tone (the meaning or feeling) that you want to convey to the reader.
- Know your readers. In many cases, certain audiences require a different approach (word choice and content).
- Make all statements informative while being brief and to the point.

The activity which is the subject of this publication was supported in part by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Pennsylvania Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the Pennsylvania Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Education should be inferred.

(Continued from page 1)

MS. CLAYTOR: I fondly remember how I felt that first day in class; I realized I was not worthless. Immediately, I was "turned around" emotionally and became better equipped to face the future.

PASSAGE: The first day...! How did things happen so quickly on the first day?

MS. CLAYTOR: It was so pleasant to communicate again. The vocational counselor and my fellow classmates understood how I felt about my problems. They were interested in listening to me. I knew after that first day I would return and complete the program.

PASSAGE: How did you find out about the single parent-homemaker program, and what would you say to others who are discouraged and in need of career guidance?

MS. CLAYTOR: I dialed a local phone number which was listed in an advertisement for the program. The vocational counselor who answered the phone was very compassionate. She explained how I qualified for the vocational guidance services and invited me to join the next scheduled class. Our conversation that day was the start of a "new beginning" for me. Others, like myself, should not sit at home wallowing in their problems. They, too, can find this type of personal and professional assistance.

PASSAGE: What did you learn in the vocational guidance classes that helped you to move on to your new career and to renew your self-confidence?

MS. CLAYTOR: I learned that I liked working with people. I also learned that my interests were leaning toward a career in the medical field. The vocational guidance classes were especially helpful in providing a step-by-step approach to not only understanding my interests but also to making a series of decisions which led to my current position at Sewickley Valley Hospital.

PASSAGE: One of those decision-making steps involved a vocational training program which prepared you to be a hospital unit clerk. Would you explain that decision, please?

MS. CLAYTOR: After I completed the career guidance classes, I needed a marketable skill which would help me find work immediately. The unit-clerk training was available at an area hospital, so I decided to take it. The program required many hours of intensive training. Whenever possible, I studied seven hours a day because our class took several progress tests, and I was determined to do well.

(Continued on page 3)

RESUME AND COVER LETTER SOFTWARE

If you have access to an IBM or IBM compatible computer, there is a new software package manufactured by Spinnaker called "The Resume Kit" that can help you make your resume and cover letter.

Included with The Resume Kit is a "complete job-search assistant" featuring a word processor, a contact/employer database (an area for storing, updating, and expanding information), and an appointment calendar. The database is excellent for its intended purpose, and the calendar has a reminder feature that can be set for up to 99 days in advance.

The manual enclosed with the software is a textbook on job-finding skills that highlights how to get an interview, how to handle an interview, and what to do after the interview. In addition, the manual includes sample cover letters and action words to use in your resume.

The Resume Kit carries a list price of $39.95, but software dealers usually discount their stock; therefore, you may find this software at a lower price.

The Resume Kit has a wealth of job-search information and will help you make an attractive resume and cover letter; thus, The Resume Kit is a good investment as a job-finding tool.

More information can be obtained by writing to Spinnaker Software, 1 Kendall Square, Cambridge, MA 02139.

(Continued from page 2)

PASSAGE: What did you have to learn?

MS. CLAYTOR: I had to learn medical terminology and to chart and graph health-related information. I graduated from the training program with a ninety-nine percent (99%) average on my tests!

PASSAGE: We know your good news did not end with that impressive performance. Sewickley Valley Hospital hired you shortly after you completed their unit-clerk training program. Please share this story with us.

MS. CLAYTOR: Yes, just one week after graduation, I was called for an interview and a typing test. The next day there was a scheduled physical examination. I was worried about passing the physical tests because of an existing health condition. My worry ended when they offered me a position in the hospital's radiology department.

PASSAGE: We would like to end this interview with any personal comments you have to share with our readers. What would you like to say?

MS. CLAYTOR: Life and its changes can be hectic; however, with my new job responsibilities, I have learned to view the changes as challenges. I feel important in my new job, and my supervisor supports the good work I am doing. I finally see an exciting future for myself; perhaps I will enroll in a specialized nursing program. I am not limiting myself or my thinking at this time.

PASSAGE: Thank you for sharing your story and its happy ending.

LEARNING TECHNICAL TERMS

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCREASED KNOWLEDGE

A famous American president said, "We have nothing to fear but fear itself." This statement can be applied to understanding technical terminology (terms used in a specific science, art, etc.). If you plan to enter a technical field, begin by understanding the terminology used in that occupation, convince yourself not to be intimidated by the technical terms, and try the following methods for learning new terms.

The first method involves starting with one term that is a part of a particular occupation's terminology instead of attempting to memorize many terms at once. For example, with medical

(Continued on page 4)

FUTURE MINORITY BUSINESS OWNERS

If you are a member of a minority group who is interested in starting a new business, gaining the know-how and financial backing for your enterprise may be holding you back from realizing your dream. You can obtain help in these areas by contacting the following agencies:

MINORITY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AGENCY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Pittsburgh Office
9 Parkway Center
Suite 250
Pittsburgh, PA 15220
(412) 921-1155

Philadelphia Office
946 Federal Building
600 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106
(215) 597-9236

Offers management and technical assistance to minority businesses including packaging, marketing, pricing, accounting, and federal procurement.

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY

378 Forum Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120
(717) 783-3877

Assists minority, especially Hispanic, entrepreneurs to identify and access business development resources in public and private sectors.

PENNSYLVANIA MINORITY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (PMBDA) PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

486 Forum Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120
(717) 783-1127

Provides low-interest, long-term loans to assist start-up or expansion of minority-owned businesses.

(Continued from page 3)

terms, you can start with one aspect of the human body and group its terms together. You could begin with **cardio** (of the heart) and add **vascular** (a system of vessels that carry blood). From these two terms, you can progress to **venal** (veins -- carry blood to the heart) and **arterial** (arteries -- carry blood away from the heart); now you have the **cardiovascular** system. Remember, begin with one term at a time and build your knowledge.

Another method operates in the opposite fashion. Instead of starting from a particular aspect of the whole, begin with a collective term and break it down into its segments. Legal terminology can serve as our model here by starting with the term **judicial** (of judges, law courts, and their functions). We can identify judges as those who **preside** (exercise control or authority) over courts. Also, one purpose of law courts is to serve **plaintiffs** (those who bring suits into courts of law) and **defendants** (those accused of breaking the law). For each plaintiff and defendant there are **lawyers** (professionals who interpret the law). Issuing a **writ** (a writing or official degree on paper from a court of law) is another function of the courts. Each of the terms above can be broken down further to learn more relative terms.

Medical and legal terms have been around for centuries, but the computer industry has spawned new terms that are a product of our generation. Acronyms (words formed from the first - or few - letters of a series of words) like **RAM**, **CPU**, and **DOS** dominate computer terminology; we can handle these terms the same way we did medical and legal terms. We can start with **PC** (personal computer) and break it down to its component parts like **RAM** (Random Access Memory) which is a temporary storage area for computer programs and proceed to **CPU** (Central Processing Unit) where information created with computer programs is processed. This processing of data is managed by **DOS** (Disk Operating System) which runs the computer. We could have just as easily begun with CPU and worked our way up to PC.

Technical terminology is easier to understand when you get a concept of its specialized areas, and use the method that is best for you to learn new terms. Practice these methods on a regular basis and your confidence and understanding of your occupation and its terms will increase.

"The greatest mistake you can make in life is to be continually fearing you will make one."

STUDENTaccesspage

Focus: Prioritizing

Directions: Make a copy of the STUDENTaccesspage for each student. The instructor can read the introductory questions to the students and open up a discussion period. The instructor should encourage the students to view their responses within the context of specific work sites and occupations.

Discussion Questions

1. How do employees prioritize their work assignments?

2. What can employers and their employees do to help prioritize work assignments?

3. Who, in addition to the supervisor, evaluates the way the an employee prioritizes his/her work assignments?

4. What adverse circumstances might prevent an employee from completing his/her work assignments?

What would you do first?

Workplace definition for prioritizing: to arrange work assignments according to time, order, and importance which is directly related to the company's needs and operations.

Directions: Read the list of activities which are to be finished by an employee during his/her work day. Have the students individually prioritize the list as to how they would proceed with the activities. Let the students use the brief workplace definition for prioritizing as a guide for completing this activity. Discuss their ranking order (prioritizing) of the activities and their reasons for making those decisions.

_____Call a company and order office supplies

_____Have a cup of coffee

_____Meet with your supervisor

_____Read an important business article

_____Do research for a new project

_____Hold a business meeting

_____Return a personal phone call

_____Answer questions from fellow employees

_____Type a two-hundred word letter

_____Share a personal story about your family

_____Have lunch

BOOKS ON SMALL BUSINESS START-UPS

If you are interested in "being your own boss," you should know all of the details that are involved in starting a new business. You can receive help from the Pennsylvania Small Business Association and from the books listed below. You can find these entrepreneurial books at most bookstores and libraries.

TEST YOUR ENTREPRENEURIAL I.Q.

Kathleen L. Hawkins and Jeffery A. Timmons

THE INSIDER'S GUIDE TO SMALL BUSINESS RESOURCES

Donald M. Dible

THE ENTREPRENEUR'S GUIDE TO STARTING A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS

James W. Halloran

STARTING AND OPERATING A BUSINESS IN PENNSYLVANIA

Michael D. Jenkins

STARTING ON A SHOESTRING

Arnold S. Goldstein

184 BUSINESSES ANYONE CAN START

C. Revel

164 MORE BUSINESSES ANYONE CAN START

C. Revel

PASSAGE lists these books only as resources and the listing of these works does not constitute a recommendation of this literature over similar literature on the subject.

ACHIEVING SUCCESS IN THE WORKPLACE

PRIORITIZING JOB DUTIES FOR NEW EMPLOYEES

"I do not know the key to success, but the key to failure is trying to please everyone."

Bill Cosby

Many recently hired employees are concerned with making a good impression on the job and want to prove their worth to the organization. Because new employees are concerned with establishing themselves as a valuable part of the "team," these individuals frequently get side-tracked from their main function by taking on too many extra duties. To help you avoid this potential dilemma, we will explore some basic ideas on how you can prioritize (establish an order of importance) on-the-job duties.

Upon starting a new job, be certain that you understand the structure of the company and the company's chain of command; in other words, know how the company operates, and know who your supervisor is. In a small company, you might report to a director or president. In a larger company, you might report to a manager or foreman. For our purposes, we will combine all of the titles and use the term supervisor. Being aware of these factors is the first step towards prioritizing your duties.

Next, you should know exactly what your supervisor expects you to accomplish on the job. This should always be your first and most important priority; everything else must take second place in order of importance. In many cases (especially in a small organization), the supervisor is directly involved in setting the direction and the goals of the organization. By establishing the supervisor's needs as the main priority, you will stay on track and will help the organization reach its intended goal.

Communicate with your supervisor on a regular basis. Because priorities constantly change, schedule time to meet with your supervisor to have your list of priorities updated. A five-minute meeting can save you from hours of frustration and can help you better concentrate your efforts.

Once you understand the supervisor's needs, take the time to learn the details of your job and how much work is involved in completing each task. Developing an accurate measurement of the time needed to finish a task is an essential part of prioritizing. This will help you create an organized schedule and will help you decide if you have the time needed to complete added duties that are often requested by coworkers.

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AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

For over twenty-six years, the Job Corps, a free program funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, has been providing help for young people between the ages of 16 and 24 who are interested in acquiring a skill or learning a trade.

Some examples of the training and education opportunities available with the Job Corps program include secretarial, nursing assistants, construction, ESL classes, and a variety of two-year college programs.

The Job Corps program provides many benefits for its students, such as a spending allowance, learning a trade, and on-the-job training.

Besides gaining occupational skills, the Job Corps students can participate in GED programs and drivers' education programs.

In addition, Job Corps students who stay with the Job Corps program for six months or more can earn an extra allowance of $75 to $100 per month. This money stays in their account until they leave Job Corps.

Job Corps is a diverse and challenging program offering extra academic opportunities and benefits. If you are interested or know of someone interested in the Job Corps Program, please call 1-800-624-9191 (toll-free) for more information.

(Continued from page 6)

When you have a full schedule and you are asked by coworkers for help with additional projects, it is in your best interest to inform your supervisor of their requests. The supervisor may not be aware of their requests, and he/she can advise you on the proper way to handle the situation. Successfully completing one job on time is better than having many unfinished projects.

Finally, always keep in mind the company's goals, your boss's needs, and the time factor. List each task in order of importance. Remember, doing a good job does not always mean pleasing everyone.

WORKPLACE LITERACY

AN IMPORTANT INVESTMENT FOR EMPLOYEES AND COMPANIES

With the workplace constantly changing and the shortage of skilled and new workers steadily increasing nationwide, companies throughout the United States are beginning to recognize the need for establishing on-site workplace academic training programs. These programs are specifically designed to provide employees with workplace skills training in reading, language, and math. Many workplace academic training programs are in operation throughout the United States, and these programs are providing companies with the educational tools needed to become better prepared to meet the challenges of today's ever-changing work world.

One such program is called Directions. This program, which is funded by a U.S. Department of Education grant and supervised by a local community college, has been producing positive results in the Chanhassen, Minnesota area. The program provides area employers with qualified instructors to teach on-site basic skills to employees.

Jerome Carlson, co-founder and co-owner of United Mailing Inc., has seen how his company has benefited from the services provided by Directions. He states, "We have higher retention and attendance rates, greater productivity, and fewer errors and accidents than some of our competitors as a result of the program."

Besides teaching reading, language, and math skills to employees, workplace skills training instructors teach participants how to solve problems, draw conclusions,

(Continued on last page)

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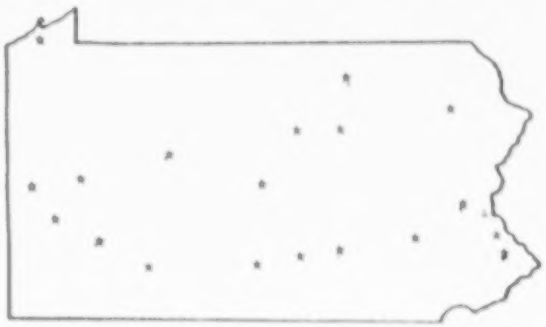
communicate, and work in teams. These skills are becoming a necessary part of the work environment and give employees the ability to adapt to the changes that occur in the workplace.

Workplace training increases productivity, boosts morale, builds an educated workforce, and enables companies to be more competitive in the marketplace. For many employers and employees, the time and funds invested in this type of training have proven to be a worthwhile investment.

THE PASSAGE INFORMATION EXCHANGE NETWORK



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ADULT, CAREER, AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION RESOURCES

Here is a sample list of the no-cost resources (ERIC Digests and other Clearinghouse publications) available to educators, adult learners, and job seekers from the ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education.

Career Development in the Workplace

Locating Job Information

Jobs of the Future

Education and Employment

Single Parents: Career-Related Issues and Needs

Trends and Directions in Career Education

Labor Market Information and Career Decision Making

Job-related Basic Skills

Individualized Career Plan Models

Vocational Education and the Work Ethic in a Changing Workplace

Nontraditional Occupations

The New Work Force

For more information and a complete list of resources, write to the ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, 1900 Kenny Road, Columbus, Ohio 43210-1090.

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TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

W.O.R.K.S.M.A.R.T. - MEETING THE DEMANDS OF TODAY'S JOB MARKET

W.O.R.K.S.M.A.R.T. makes people realize the importance of continued learning. With the constant changes in the workplace, today's employees and tomorrow's job hopefuls can learn to refine their present skills and acquire new skills which are attractive to employers.

How does one prepare people for the demands of today's job market and the difficulties and challenges of tomorrow's job requirements? One way in which The Midland Center, Inc. has helped displaced workers overcome obstacles is to enroll them in a program called W.O.R.K.S.M.A.R.T. This training program was designed by The Midland Center, Inc. and is funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry, Bureau of Job Training Partnership.

The heart of the program was based on national research that surveyed the types of skills employers want their employees to have in the 1990s. The research revealed that companies are inclined to select individuals who can perform a wide variety of work assignments.

W.O.R.K.S.M.A.R.T. addresses these employer needs by providing instruction in the areas of mathematics, written communications, public speaking, listening, analytical thinking, group problem-solving, and employment testing. The program also prepares workers for the challenges that employers have traditionally not required many employees to face. Among these are participating in problem-solving and self-managing work teams, solving technical and quality-oriented problems, writing and verbalizing reports, operating computers, and analyzing business and financial reports.

Because organizations are in a constant state of change, new workplace demands can be created daily! Obtaining the skills to support innovative management philosophies and work procedures is becoming essential for all individuals. W.O.R.K.S.M.A.R.T. addresses these changes by exploring new concepts through hands-on activities, discussions, simulations, and pencil and paper exercises in an informal classroom setting.

Although the W.O.R.K.S.M.A.R.T. program is not the answer to every problem facing today's job seeker/employee, the training does give individuals a competitive edge in today's and tomorrow's changing workplace. Learning! What better way is there to be ready for new employment opportunities?

MATHEMATICS... WHAT IS IT?

Mathematics is the broad term dealing with quantities, magnitudes, and forms in relationship to each other by the use of numbers and symbols.

Under mathematics we find these primary categories:

BASIC MATH - The use of the four operators (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division) with whole numbers, percents, and fractions.

ALGEBRA - A mathematical system used to generalize certain arithmetical operations by permitting letters or other symbols to stand for numbers.

GEOMETRY - The branch of mathematics that deals with points, lines, surfaces, and solids, and examines their properties, measurements, and relations in space.

CALCULUS - The branch of mathematics using a special system of algebraic notation to solve complex problems.

TRIGONOMETRY - The branch of mathematics that deals with the ratios between the sides of a right triangle with reference to either acute angle, the relation between ratios, and the application of these facts in finding the unknown sides or angles of any triangle.

BUSINESS MATH - The branch of mathematics as it applies to the system of bookkeeping and accounting of daily business activities such as purchases, sales, taxes, stocks and bonds, and adjustment of inventories.

Each of the above categories is specific to a career field with some occupations requiring the knowledge of more than one math discipline from its practitioners.

FEAR NO MATH

OVERCOMING MATH AVOIDANCE

"Mathematical anxiety is not a clever slogan; it is a reality, affecting millions of people, handicapping them in their daily lives and reducing their job opportunities."

Peter Hilton, Beaumont University Professor

Mr. Hilton's statement is correct. There are millions of men and women who avoid, hate, and inwardly cringe at using math on a daily basis. What circumstances have caused these people to lock math out of their daily lives that in turn denies them expanded opportunities for employment? The reasons are many; here are a few of them.

Teachers who quickly find solutions to math problems while their students are bogged down with jumbled numbers may have unwittingly given the students the impression that they are not mathematically inclined. To make matters worse, parents may reinforce this belief by passively accepting poor math grades with the excuse that their children were not born "math minded."

Another contributor to math avoidance is the lack of clearly written explanations of math rules and concepts in many textbooks. This improper presentation of math vocabulary and rules leads many children and adults to accept the ideology that "If you have not learned it by now, you never will." This mind-set freezes them from attempts to learn new math skills.

In addition, research studies show that teenagers, in their quest for popularity, do not want to appear too smart. To avoid looking too smart, they do not ask questions about math rules they do not understand. In contrast to this, but in keeping with the popularity theme, there are students who do not want to appear too dumb either. They, too, do not ask questions on math. They elect to "fake it" about knowing math.

If one or more of these situations have been your experience, you can overcome your fear of math. Please realize that no one is born a math whiz. You can learn new math skills by

(Continued on page 6)

Adult learners solving math problems together

STUDENTaccesspage

Introduction: Discover ways you can share with others how to complete a short-term project or small task. The following series of exercises will prepare you to teach others a new skill. Remember that your knowledge increases in value whenever you are able to help others benefit from your work, education, and life experiences.

Exercise One

Write the things you do well and would like to teach to others--e.g., landscaping, writing short stories, and telling stories.

Exercise Two

Select one skill from your list that you would like to demonstrate. Write a brief description of that skill; i.e., I will demonstrate how to select yard plants.

Exercise Three

Make a list of the supportive skills you will need in order to complete this activity; e.g., know how to read and follow directions and be good with your hands.

Focus: Sharing Knowledge

Exercise Four

List the items you will need to complete this project or small task--e.g., pictures of plants, plant growth charts, and landscaping books.

Exercise Five

Outline the action steps needed to complete this activity (what you will say or do first, second, third, and so on).

Exercise Six

Plan a rehearsal of the action steps described in Exercise Five. Make changes in the steps if you have discovered a better way to demonstrate your skill. Time yourself. How long did it take you to finish the demonstration?

Exercise Seven

Present your activity to an individual or a group of individuals who are willing to learn something new and interesting. Take time for audience feedback, and conduct your own evaluation of the activity. You will discover that teaching others can be a rewarding experience and a valuable skill for on-the-job success.

CAREERS THAT MATH BUILT

The PASSAGE editors spoke with math teachers from Pennsylvania to get a listing of occupations that require good math skills, and each teacher was in agreement on which careers demand exemplary knowledge of math.

At the top of their career list are such fields as Accounting, Architecture, and Engineering followed by Actuary, Marine Navigation, and Financial Management. These occupations need a "specialized" math discipline which means that just because accountants are good with numbers that does not mean they can solve mathematical problems faced by engineers and vice-versa.

Some of the career fields that need less math specialization are computer science, research math, and the biological sciences. Statistical math is a main tool used by insurance companies and their agents to write insurance polices based on findings from statisticians.

All of these careers demand specific math skills that branch from the general math most of us use everyday. Proficiency in general math is a highly desirable skill for employees working in the retail and service industries. Most occupations where money and inventory figures must be recorded accurately demand good general math skills; therefore, building a solid foundation in general math today could lead to a promising career in a "math built" occupation tomorrow.

PASSAGE sends a big "THANK YOU!" to the following math professionals for their input:

Robert Fisher - Girard College, Philadelphia, PA.

Bruce Brown - Community College of Beaver County, Monaca, PA

William Kolatack - Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics, Philadelphia, PA

(Continued from page 4)

starting from the math level you are at now and building on it. It takes time to learn math, and it is not shameful to not understand math concepts quickly. You just need time, guidance, and practice to do things with numbers you never thought you could do.

Remember that you have a right to learn at your own pace. To accomplish this, you could arrange for individualized help from a teacher or a volunteer tutor at a school in your area. Another way is to take a math course along with others working at your current math level or a little above it. If you take a math course or work privately with an instructor, ask questions until you fully understand the concept being taught. Do not compare yourself to others who get answers quickly. The odds are that these people spent many hours practicing their math skills; you could do the same. Also, you can reinforce your learning of math by saying each math step verbally as you work out each problem.

Once your math skills increase, you will find many new job occupations open to you (see sidebar). Your possibilities for employment will increase, and your math avoidance will become math acceptance.

HELPING OTHERS

MELLON'S COMMITMENT TO ITS COMMUNITIES

Most people view a bank as a place where they can cash checks, deposit money, or receive a loan; however, there is another side to many banking institutions that the majority of the public does not often see. A great number of these institutions are committed to investing in their local communities by providing grants and assistance for educational and job training programs. Mellon Bank Corporation is an excellent example of an organization that is dedicated to assisting communities with financial support.

With 334 community offices in Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Washington D.C., Mellon Bank has been providing assistance to its communities for more than a century. In 1989, Mellon contributed $2.4 million in grants to various educational, neighborhood and economic development, and health and human service organizations.

"Mellon Bank Corporation firmly believes that they have an opportunity and a responsibility to help the communities they serve. With Mellon's help, many communities, organizations, and projects are given the extra assistance needed to help themselves and others," states Marlene Valicenti, Assistant Vice President and Market Manager of three Beaver County Pennsylvania branch offices.

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PASSAGE
"YOUR WORKPLACE AND JOB SKILLS INFORMATION NEWSLETTER" MAY, 1990

Dear PASSAGE Reader:

Will you please take a few minutes to provide reader feedback for the workplace and job skills information newsletter--PASSAGE? We would like to know how YOU feel about PASSAGE's content, readability, design, and utility.

If you would like to participate in a brief phone survey, our editors and support staff welcome your call, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. You can reach us by dialing one of the numbers listed here:

412-643-1350 Local
1-800-345-5443 PA Toll Free
1-800-441-2671 Outside PA Toll Free

If you would prefer to write your comments and suggestions, please do so. You can mail your letter to the following address:

PASSAGE Newsletter Feedback
The Midland Center, Inc.
617 Midland Avenue
Midland, Pennsylvania 15059

We appreciate our readers who have already written or called to share their comments about PASSAGE, and we hope that you will help us complete our final project review on, or before, June 15, 1990.

Sincerely,

PASSAGE Editors

Meet Editors Bernie Mangle, Ed Thoma, and John Goberish

JOB DEVELOPERS

BLOODHOUNDS FOR EMPLOYMENT

They are known as Job Developers or Head Hunters, but they do not develop jobs, nor do they hunt for heads. Perhaps their title should be Job Opportunity Specialists, because they do help potential employees and employers find each other. No matter what you may call them, they fill a growing need in today's job market for employer/employee match-making.

Job Developers are go-getters. They are not discouraged by job markets with low demands for workers, and they are not intimidated by company executives with high demands for employee skills. Persistent? You bet they are! The livelihood of Job Developers is closely tied to their work performance, so they do everything they can to assist their clients whether it be finding jobs or locating the right personnel.

Job Developers must know the daily administrative operations of many companies. They must understand the production, marketing, and distribution methods of several industries. In addition, they should have sound training in research methods to gain a comprehensive knowledge of employment trends and requirements. To gain this knowledge and training, Job Developers generally have a college degree and experience in dealing with the overall operations of the employment market.

Job Developers are trained professionals who have one goal in mind--finding and filling job openings. No one can guarantee you employment, but Job Developers will do their best to help you find vacant employment positions; once found, it is up to you to compete for it. Nevertheless, having leads to known and unadvertised job openings is a tremendous help to job seekers.

If you decide to check into the services of a Job Developer, take your resume and references with you. If you do not have a resume, check the November and December, 1989, issues and March, 1990, issue of PASSAGE for help in organizing your overall resume format. Then locate an agency that will prepare a final copy of your resume for you if you do not have

(Continued on page 2)

HOW TO FIND A JOB DEVELOPER

Company Job Developer

Firms employ Job Developers to fill vacancies due to normal business turnovers of company personnel in addition to filling new positions created by company expansion. These Job Developers mainly work through state employment agencies, employment ads, and temporary employment firms; it would be to your advantage to check all of these areas. Also, use direct mailing of your resume and job shadowing/networking techniques (see the December, 1989, issue of PASSAGE for information on these techniques). No fee is required.

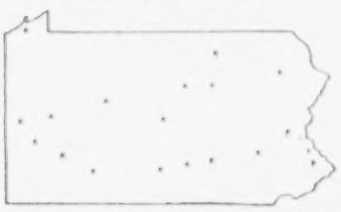
Social Agency Job Developer

A large number of self-help, state, and federal agencies employ Job Developers to assist displaced workers, seasonal employees, teenagers, and nonskilled workers find employment. Usually these Job Developers work closely with other professionals in helping clients acquire the skills needed for reentry into today's job market. Contact the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the United Way agency, and the Pennsylvania Job Center in your area for referrals to organizations offering Job Search services. Usually there is no charge unless special considerations are desired.

Free-Lance Job Developer

Free-lance Job Developers are self-employed. These Job Developers may operate over a broader geographical area than other types of Job Developers who mainly concentrate on a client's regional home area. Free-lance Job Developers charge a fee for their services -- usually from 10% to 20% of the first year's gross wages earned by clients who obtained employment through their services. Contact your local Better Business Bureau, County Court House, or Chamber of Commerce for referral to free-lance Job Developers in your area.

THE PASSAGE INFORMATION EXCHANGE NETWORK



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it prepared already. Make sure your resume is set up to describe your specific skills, talents, and career background. The more precise information you can give your Job Developer the better he will be able to assist you in your job search. Check our sidebar for suggestions on how to contact the type of Job Developer best suited to your situation.

EDUCATION AND CAREERS

ERIC/ACVE: A HELPFUL RESOURCE

If you are an educator, adult student, and/or a job seeker looking for educational and career-related information, then the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education (ACVE) can be a valuable resource to you.

ERIC, a program funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, has been in existence for 24 years. There are sixteen ERIC Clearinghouses (each one specializes in different fields such as management, science, and communications) that answer information requests daily. Last year the Clearinghouses collectively responded to more than 100,000 requests for career and educational resource materials.

The ERIC/ACVE Clearinghouse continually collects and distributes written materials on adult, career, and vocational education topics of interest to individuals and organizations. The resource materials are stored in a computer for quick reference and are updated on a regular basis.

There are many ways in which ERIC/ACVE responds to requests. The Clearinghouse can make referrals to appropriate agencies, search its computer listings and records for relevant material, and answer questions that deal with a specific topic or career field. One of their most frequently requested publications is the ERIC Digest which provides a two-page summary of current educational, training, and career related topics.

Many of the ERIC/ACVE resources (i.e., ERIC Digest) are free of cost. However, there is a fee for all major publications (40 pages or more) and all computer searches.

Also, if you have a document, research, or information that may be useful to educational practitioners, adult students, or job seekers, ERIC/ACVE always welcomes written materials that can be included in its resource library.

Let the ERIC Clearinghouse help you find the answers to your educational and career-related questions. See the accompanying sidebar on page three for a sample listing of resources and the address of the ERIC/ACVE Clearinghouse.

RESOURCES FOR INSIDE INFORMATION

GALE Research, Inc. provides reference and information books on many topics related to agencies, companies, and professional careers. Below is a partial list of their workplace-related resource materials. If you wish to inquire about these resources or about their other offerings, please address your correspondence to: GALE Research, Inc., Book Tower, Dept., 77748, Detroit, Michigan 48277-0748 or call toll free: 1-800-223-GALE.

PROFESSIONS AND OCCUPATIONS SOURCE BOOK

Nearly 100 profession/occupation profiles are presented. Each profile includes information on general career guides, standards and certification agencies, directories of educational programs and institutions, and trade periodicals.

WARD'S BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Contains hard-to-find information on 90,000 private and public companies.

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF BUSINESS INFORMATION SOURCES

A wide range of business information sources are listed under 1000 alphabetically arranged business subjects. In addition, current business interests, new technologies, and new industries are highlighted.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS DIRECTORY

Find exactly who can provide the special training needed. This directory is a guide to workshops, seminars, videos, and other training programs that can enhance skills and personal development.

(Continued from page 6)

Mellon has helped community organizations and projects by providing funds for the purchase of equipment and instructional materials, by donating office space, and by sponsoring educational and employment training programs. For example, Mellon, in cooperation with Point Park College and the City of Pittsburgh, sponsored an enhanced office skills program for thirty-seven dislocated workers. After completing the program, the graduates acquired the skills needed to be word processors, secretaries, data entry clerks, and personnel assistants.

In addition to supplying funds, Mellon's staff has invested its time and talent. Sixty-three company employees from Philadelphia and Pittsburgh were trained as volunteers for literacy council programs and as tutors for adult students. Also, the employees of Mellon created and developed the Library Compact which has been designed to stress the values of reading, literacy, and libraries to the general public.

PASSAGE commends Mellon Corporation and its employees for contributing to the growth and betterment of its local communities by providing the funds, resources, and knowledge needed to assist programs and projects that help others.

Source: Mellon Bank Corporation 1989 Community Report

INFORMATION EXCHANGE IN THE WORKPLACE

KNOWING HOW TO SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE WITH OTHERS

Workers of all ages can enhance their opportunities for job security and promotion through an understanding of the ways academic, work, and life experiences can be shared in the workplace. On-the-job success can depend on your willingness to share what you have learned with others.

You can create an environment for exchanging ideas and other information by taking time to talk with your fellow employees about work. Employers encourage conversations among employees who are interested in improving the quality of their work and strengthening their relationships with coworkers. In fact, many employers will schedule time for employees to discuss their on-the-job responsibilities, including ways employees can better work together. Exchanging ideas in the workplace is a great way to share information about your vocational skills, academic background, and personal history.

The practice of writing notes and properly saving important work-related information is another way of sharing knowledge with your fellow workers. Reports, notes, and letters are documents that show how you gather, process, and/or

(Continued on last page)

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This newsletter was produced internally by TMCI.

1-800-345-5443 (PA Toll Free)

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share information. Your coworkers may depend on these documents for facts and procedures that will help them to do their jobs better. For example, your notes and reports may be used to educate new employees about their responsibilities. A letter you wrote to a supply company may later serve as evidence that a shipment of items was late, relinquishing your company's responsibility for any delays in production. Keeping good written records of work activities is a responsible way of sharing knowledge with others.

Participating in discussions and keeping written records are extremely important tools for sharing knowledge at work; equally important is your ability to follow through on those spoken and written words with actions. You can further share knowledge by teaching your coworkers how to complete tasks at work. On-the-job training is a pleasant learning experience when you are willing to invest some time with your fellow workers demonstrating how tasks are accomplished.

Do not be hesitant to share with others what you have learned through education, at work, or in life. Employers may value your experiences, but they will reward your ability to share knowledge with your coworkers.

BCALMC
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PASSAGE

"Your workplace and job skills information newsletter"

May 1990

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PASSAGE
"YOUR WORKPLACE AND JOB SKILLS INFORMATION NEWSLETTER" JUNE, 1990

ADVANCE

Last month, PASSAGE featured an article on the ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education (ACVE). Pennsylvania's adult educators have the added benefit of increased accessibility to ERIC's resources through ADVANCE--Pennsylvania's Adult Basic and Literacy Education Clearinghouse. ADVANCE is funded by the Division of Adult Basic and Literacy Education and administered by the State Library of Pennsylvania.

ERIC services available through ADVANCE include customized searches of the ERIC database to identify materials on the client's topic of interest and retrieval of relevant documents. Through the State Library, ADVANCE provides adult educators with microfiche copies of ERIC documents and photocopies of journal articles. In addition, ADVANCE attempts to acquire, for its loan collection, print copies of materials developed directly by ERIC.

In support of its partnership with ERIC, ADVANCE provides ERIC/ACVE with copies of Pennsylvania's Adult Education Act Section 353 reports and products for review and possible inclusion in the ERIC database. Thus, Pennsylvania's exemplary materials can be made available to programs in other states.

For information about ERIC services available through ADVANCE, call Annette McAlister at 1-800-922-2283 or write the PDE Resource Center, 333 Market Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17126-0333.

EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE

FINANCIAL AID: TAKING THE FIRST STEP

You are about to receive your GED diploma, and you want to continue your education in college or a technical school; however, you lack the finances needed for your tuition. How can you receive financial assistance? Where do you look? To help you answer these questions, PASSAGE will provide you with some basic information about financial aid for attending school and advice on who you can turn to for assistance in receiving financial aid.

There are three basic types of financial aid available from state and federal sources for students. The different types of assistance are grants, the College Work-Study program, and loans. A grant is financial assistance that students do not have to pay back. The College Work-Study program provides students with the opportunity to work and earn an income to help pay for their educational expenses. A loan is money that is borrowed by the student, and the money must be paid back with interest at a later date.

In addition to receiving financial assistance from state and federal sources, students may be eligible for scholarships or funds that are offered by many educational institutions, foundations, civic groups, agencies, organizations, and individuals interested in supporting higher education. In most cases, the money received from these sources does not have to be paid back by the student.

Who is eligible for financial aid? The guidelines vary depending on the specific eligibility requirements of each particular grant, loan, scholarship, or College Work-Study program. However, having a financial need, having a high school diploma or GED, and demonstrating the ability to benefit from higher education or vocational training are common requirements of all financial aid sources.

With this understanding of the basic types of financial aid available, contact the financial aid officer at the school you are

(Continued on page 2)

STATE COLLEGE COMMUNITY EDUCATION

The State College Area School District Community Education Program has many educational, vocational, and employment services for adults and youths in Centre County Pennsylvania. Here is a sample of the many services that are available.

What's Next? - This is a career information seminar. It is open to individuals who have, or are currently working on, a high school equivalency diploma or to anyone seeking new employment opportunities. (No cost)

The Small Business Enterprise Program - The program provides training for individuals who own a business or who are interested in starting a business. (Registration fee)

Home and Family Development Program - The program provides opportunities for adults and teenage parents to work with home economists to improve their home management skills and to prepare them for employment. (No cost)

Lifelong Learning Line - The Lifelong Learning Line (LLL) is a referral service that provides information about area educational, vocational, recreational, and employment programs and services. (No cost)

ABE, GED, ACT 143, and ESL - These programs help individuals improve their basic skills, obtain a high school equivalency diploma, prepare a resume, study for driver tests, learn English as a second language, and prepare for citizenship. (No cost)

DISCOVER for Adults - A computer based career guidance program that helps individuals develop personal goals and objectives for effective career and personal decision-making. (Registration fee)

Pre-Retirement Planning Seminars - Seminars (six to eight sessions) that help individuals plan for their retirement. People 35 years and older are encouraged to attend. (Registration fee)

If you are interested in any of these programs or would like more information, call (814) 231-1061.

(Continued from page 1)

interested in attending or your current educational program counselor. The financial aid officer or your program counselor will be able to provide you with additional information about the various types of funds that may be available to you.

By utilizing the information provided, you can get a good start in finding the assistance that may be available for you to enter school and to continue building your knowledge and skills for future employment opportunities.

Sources: *Application for Pennsylvania State & Federal Student Aid*
Federal Student Aid Fact Sheet 1990-1991
Keys To Student Aid For Pennsylvanians

EMPLOYEE HOMEWORK

READING HABITS FOR THE WORKPLACE

When Alice Green's supervisor referred to a new piece of audio-visual equipment that would be demonstrated at an upcoming employee seminar, Alice wasted no time in securing a copy of the product's description. She wanted to read and study the written information provided by the equipment's manufacturer prior to her participation in the seminar.

Jacque Berry, secretary for a small business development center, noticed a number of clients had inquired about financial assistance to support their new business start-ups. While reading an article in the newspaper **USA Today**, Jacque discovered a national toll-free number for persons who have questions about ways to finance small business projects. She cut the article from the newspaper and placed it with a brief note on her supervisor's desk.

These employees understand the advantages of reading work-related newspaper articles, trade magazines, manuals, and books. Alice was thinking ahead and preparing for her upcoming on-the-job training responsibilities. She recognized the importance of having prior knowledge of the new audio-visual equipment and its special features.

Jacque viewed the article in **USA Today** on small business financial assistance as a way to be a team player at work. Jacque has found that reading work-related information provides her with opportunities to expand her company's resources and services.

These case histories provide excellent reasons why employees should develop a habit of reading for information which is useful in the workplace. With changes in technology and work environments, employees who do their reading homework can discover ways to gather and share technical information that favorably affects their jobs and their company's success.

(Continued on page 3)

DISCOVER FOR ADULTS

DISCOVER is a career guidance computer software package of the American College Testing (ACT) program. DISCOVER is comprised of nine (9) modules that are used by college students and adult learners who seek information on where to locate jobs, what jobs are currently in demand, and which career fields match their abilities and personalities. In addition, DISCOVER will help these individuals plan their education needs to pursue their chosen career.

Here is a list of the nine (9) career guidance modules in DISCOVER:

1. **Beginning The Career Journey**
2. **Learning About The World Of Work**
3. **Learning About Yourself**
4. **Finding Occupations**
5. **Learning About Occupations**
6. **Making Educational Choices**
7. **Planning Your Next Steps**
8. **Planning Your Career**
9. **Making Transition**

Ask your instructor and local social services agencies about DISCOVER and other career-based programs that are available in your area.

(Continued from page 2)

Employees can find work-related resources through their local library systems. Trade magazines, newspapers, books, and videos on various workplace subjects such as improving customer services and ways to make work manageable are readily available. Work sites often have their own employee resource libraries which contain valuable product, job, and/or general workplace information. Furthermore, companies who supply other work sites with products and/or services will often provide a wealth of reading material to employees.

A sample of helpful work-related resources

Job hopefuls can prepare themselves for the workplace by developing good investigative reading habits now. They can begin exploring their local newspapers for interesting information about businesses, careers, and employment trends. Job seekers can also visit the library or consult local adult education centers and colleges for career-related materials. When employed, these individuals will already have learned the benefits of doing their reading homework.

A JOB FOR THE 1990s

THE PARALEGAL PROFESSION

According to a recent survey by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, the paralegal profession is predicted to be the leader in job openings for Pennsylvanians during the 1990s. PASSAGE interviewed a successful paralegal to give our readers information about this exciting field. Our interviewee was Mrs. Myrna Jessell, CPS (Certified Professional Secretary). Mrs. Jessell is employed by Attorney Timothy Finn whose law office is located in Beaver, Pennsylvania.

PASSAGE: Mrs. Jessell, what formal education is necessary for entering the paralegal profession, and where did you receive your training for your career?

MRS. JESSELL: First, while it is certainly possible to enter a paralegal program with only a high school or GED diploma, a paralegal's chances for success increase in relation to the additional education they receive.

(Continued on page 4)

BOOKS ON WRITING

Preparing memos, letters, and reports in a meaningful way requires good writing skills. The following resources are inexpensive and offer fine examples and lessons for developing writing skills. You will find these material and others which are similar in content in most bookstores and libraries.

Students' Guide For Writing College Papers - Third Edition

A Manual For Writers - Fifth Edition
Both works are by Kate L. Turbian and present lessons in writing essays, term papers, and various types of reports; University of Chicago Press.

Becoming A Writer
Covers grammar usage and writing style; Dorothea Brande; J.P. Tarcher, Inc.

The Bantam Book Of Correct Letter Writing
Covers business and personal memos, letters, and other business documents; Bantam Books.

Roget's College Thesaurus
A reference work to find precise words to express ideas; Signet Books - New American Library Company

Webster's New World Dictionary
A reference work to locate words for correct spelling and meaning; Simon and Schuster Publishing Company.

THE PASSAGE INFORMATION EXCHANGE NETWORK

(Continued from page 3)

Graduating from a business school, which takes about six (6) months to a year, increases your opportunities for employment with small law firms and attorneys. However, a degree from a two year junior college or a four year college is desired by larger firms and most small firms. Also, a four year college degree will give paralegals the education needed to become a junior assistant with a large law firm.

In the past, some large law firms trained their employees to be paralegals without requiring them to first obtain a degree or certificate, but this practice is rare today. The more education paralegals have the greater will be the opportunities presented to them. I received my paralegal training at Penn State, Beaver Campus, Continuing Education Program, in Monaca, Pennsylvania.

PASSAGE: Describe for us, please, your typical work day.

MRS. JESSELL: On any given day, I may outline various types of complaints, petitions, and wills. I also prepare documents for real estate closings, mortgages, and notes. Additionally, I draft correspondence relative to each case. There is a fine line between paralegal duties and legal secretarial duties, and I usually perform both functions. Paralegals do not need to know how to type or do word processing as secretaries do, but having such skills makes paralegals more valuable to an employer which increases their chances for being hired.

PASSAGE: What personality types are better suited to the paralegal profession?

MRS. JESSELL: One of the duties of a paralegal is to interview clients and witnesses. Having an outgoing, pleasant personality with the ability to soothe agitated clients is an added advantage in the paralegal field. The paralegal must be a great communicator between lawyer and client.

PASSAGE: Mrs. Jessell, are there associations that certify paralegals similar to the Bar Associations for lawyers?

MRS. JESSELL: There is no mandatory (required) certification in Pennsylvania at present. Certification may be obtained through the National Association of Legal Assistants. This organization conducts tests three time a year, and membership is strictly voluntary.

PASSAGE: Are there career advancement possibilities for paralegals, Mrs. Jessell?

MRS. JESSELL: Some of the larger law firms are instituting career tract programs and a graduated salary scale. Paralegals start out as junior assistants and eventually become paralegal managers.

(Continued on page 5)

SAMPLE OUTLINE STRUCTURE

Let us imagine that your employer wants to hold a company open house for all purchasing agents employed by client firms. Your boss asks you to write a two-page invitation for the event. The outline for the two-page letter could look like this:

Subject: Company Open House

A) Opening Comments
1. Personalized introduction
2. Purpose of open house

B) Location And Time
1. Exact day and time
2. Detailed directions from airport to company site

C. Activities
1. Welcome and presentation
2. Lunch
3. Company tour

D. Closing Remarks
1. Notification of participation by a specific date
2. Who to notify
3. Summary statements

Each entry could easily be a paragraph in length. Notice how they follow a logical sequence of importance and events.

The activity which is the subject of this publication was supported in part by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Pennsylvania Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the Pennsylvania Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Education should be inferred.

(Continued from page 4)

PASSAGE: What advice or suggestions do you have for adult learners planning to enter the paralegal field?

MRS. JESSELL: The paralegal certificate program requires a good deal of reading and class preparation in order to get the most out of the program. I would suggest adult learners have good organizational skills and good study habits. Most important, they also should not be afraid to ask questions.

WRITING SKILLS

BEGIN WITH A GOOD OUTLINE

Putting ideas and data into written form is important to any company's operations. Each business day turns out thousands of memos, invoices, sales receipts, job orders, letters, and reports that must be clearly written; thus, your ability to communicate effectively through writing is a skill you should refine to increase your chances of employment. Effective writing begins by organizing your thoughts and outlining them on paper.

An outline will provide you with a written record of your thoughts on a specific subject or topic. Outlines also help you to remember important points you might forget.

To begin your outline, select one specific topic or subject for your document. Now decide on an orderly flow of information that will support your main subject. Arranging your supporting ideas and details in a particular order can be done in many different ways. For example, ideas can be arranged in a time sequence (the order that the events occur), an order of importance (least to most important information), or a contrast form (comparing one view point to another). Make certain that all supporting ideas relate directly to the main topic or subject.

Once you decide on how you will present your information, make notes of ALL the associated facts, opinions, and examples you have on your subject. Now, arrange this information in the order you choose to present it. Check your entries to see if they answer the questions who, what, when, where, how, and why. If an entry does not answer any of these questions or is loosely related to your subject, cross it out. Rearrange your list again and as often as necessary. When everything is in logical order, begin writing your document using your outline as a guide.

Outlines vary in length depending on the type of document being created. Practice making outlines of different document types (memos and reports) to get an idea of how to organize your thoughts and ideas for various writing assignments.

Memos, sales receipts, invoices, and other daily business forms do not need outlines, but these forms do need to be filled

(Continued on page 7)

Simulation: You have just attended a department meeting to learn about changes in the personnel policies for ABC Company. Your supervisor has asked you to summarize the changes in memo form and send the new information to fellow employees who were unable to attend the meeting because of scheduling difficulties.

Directions: Read the following memo example and discuss its strengths and weaknesses. Identify grammatical, spelling, and general communication errors. On a separate sheet of paper, list the changes you would make to the memo. Then, turn the STUDENTaccesspage to read our suggested corrections, and compare them to your findings.

MEMORANDUM

To: Bob in Sales
Mary in Clerical
From: James J. Willows, Division Coordinator
ABC Company
Subject: Changes in Personnel Policy
Date: June 4, 1990

Because you were unable to attend last week's meeting, I am responsible for sharing with you the changes in ABC Company's personnel policies. Read this information carefully.

1. We have a new pension plan that requires you to contribute a percentage of your weekly gross income. Everyone is affected by this new plan except for some people who know who they are.

2. No one will have an assigned parking space beginning July 1, 1990. The management has asked us to be patient with our fellow employees who may be taking our regular parking spaces. Rumor has it that there may be fights over this new policy.

3. There has been to much lateness in the shop department. Orders have been going out late, and the customers are complaining. I know that you do not work in that department; however, I felt you should know about it. Bob Franks was put on probation because he showed up late every day last week.

Please call me if you have any questions concerning these personnel policies.

Suggested Corrections

MEMORANDUM

To: Bob Jones, Sales Department
Mary Williams, Clerical Department
From: James J. Willows, Division Coordinator
Subject: Changes in Personnel Policy
Date: June 4, 1990

The following personnel information was shared at the May 29, 1990 meeting that you were unable to attend because of scheduling difficulties. Please read this information carefully.

1. ABC Company will have a new pension plan beginning July 1, 1990. Employees can meet with their immediate supervisors on, or before, June 30, 1990, to discuss how the plan will affect their weekly gross incomes. Employees will have different rates of deduction depending on their years of service.

2. Beginning July 1, 1990, ABC Company will abolish the current practice of assigned employee parking spaces. This change in policy applies to management and labor personnel.

3. Employees need to refer to ABC Company's Employee Lateness Policy on page seven of the personnel manual. Oral warnings for lateness will no longer be given after June 30, 1990; beginning July 1, 1990, employees will receive written notification of their tardiness. Even though lateness has not been a problem in your departments, you need to be aware of this change in policy. The print shop will be forwarding an amended copy of page seven to you as soon as possible.

Please call me at extension 407 should you have any questions concerning the personnel policy changes announced at the May 29, 1990 meeting.

BOOKS FOR THINKERS AND DOERS

If you enjoy reading about success, work, and parenting, any combination of the following books may be of interest to you:

How To Achieve Success *by Michael Korda*
Discusses the way to success and your right to succeed.

People Skills *by Robert Bolton, PH.D.*
Learn how to assert yourself, to listen to others and to resolve conflicts.

The Homemaker's Guide To Entering The Job Market *by Donald E. Lussier*
A complete guide for homemakers who are thinking about entering the workplace.

Where Do I Go From Here With My Life *by Crystal and Bolles*
A systematic and effective life/work planning manual.

Enough Is Enough *by Carol Orsborn*
Helps women understand themselves, enjoy living, appreciate family, and take a look at the superwoman syndrome.

The Woman Who Works, The Parent Who Cares *by Sanger, M.D. and Kelly*
A revolutionary program for raising your child when you work.

(Continued from page 5)

out correctly with specific information. Names, dates, times, and remarks must be written in clear terms; this will save time and confusion when the forms need to be verified.

Refining your writing skills can be easier by following these suggestions:

1. Select a specific subject, and write it down.
2. Make a list of information and examples that relate to your main subject.
3. Organize your outline in a logical sequence.
4. Choose your best subject-related information for your outline.
5. Write your document around your outline, and keep to your subject.
6. Fill out all business forms with detailed information.

In time, you will develop good writing skills that will help you impress employers. For more help, check the accompanying sidebars (pages 5 and 7) and this month's STUDENTaccesspage.

POSITIVE THINKING

A SELF-MOTIVATION STRATEGY

For just a moment, take the time from your busy day to think about your hopes and dreams. Block out the surrounding noises and focus your thoughts on your plans for a career, family, and making enough money to live comfortably. Your desire to accomplish your career goals is strong, and you begin to mentally explore the many "what if" statements that build the foundation for fulfilling those goals.

Unfortunately, many individuals do not take those brief moments to reflect upon their hopes and dreams, because they are distracted by life's numerous demands and stresses. They have deferred their career plans again (for a number of reasons), and they have not asked themselves the right questions which can reveal workable solutions to achieving their goals. The following material provides a glimpse of the thoughts of one individual who understands the power of positive thinking and the importance of self-motivation.

Negative Thought: If I go back to school at my age there will be too many problems.

Positive Thinking: What if there are others my age enrolled in college? Who can I talk to?

Negative Thought: My family and friends will think it is silly for me to pursue a career.

Positive Thinking: What if I had their support? Have I ever taken the time to tell them how I feel about pursuing my education and finding a job?

Negative Thought: We have no extra money to spend on an education.

(Continued on last page)

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(Continued from page 7)

Positive Thinking: What if financial assistance is available? Do any training schools or agencies offer funds that help people in my financial situation?

Negative Thought: I do not have enough time for school and family.

Positive Thinking: What if I asked the family to help with some of the household chores? Will my education and career be a positive influence on the family?

Negative Thought: I am afraid of failure.

Positive Thinking: What if I am successful? How will I feel about myself? How do I begin to take the first step on the way to a career?

Negative Thought: I am too old to start over. No company would hire me at my age.

Positive Thinking: What if a company were looking for employees with my work and life experiences? Will learning new skills better my chances for employment?

Everyone needs to take the time from their busy schedules to think positively about the options life has to offer. You can begin your self-motivation exercises by turning those negative thoughts into positive action steps.

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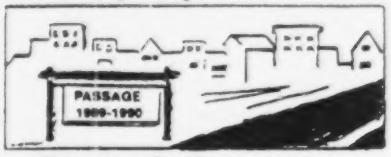
The Pennsylvania Department of Education

The Beaver County Area Labor-Management Committee

The Midland Center, Inc. and its Volunteers In Service To America Literacy Corps



Respondent Demographics for Pennsylvania:

Aliquippa	Lock Haven
Beaver Falls	Mechanicsburg
Bethlehem	Media
Callery	Midland
Carlisle	Monaca
Chambersburg	Pittsburgh
Clearfield	Reynoldsville
Greensburg	Shippingport
Harrisburg	Solebury
Hughesville	Somerset
Karns City	State College
Lewistown	Towanda

The activity which is the subject of this publication was supported in part by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Pennsylvania Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the Pennsylvania Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Education should be inferred.

Workplace Literacy Survey Results

Dear PASSAGE Reader,

In June, 1990, the Associated Press reported the findings and recommendations of the Commission on the Skills of the American Work Force. The panel included top business, education, and labor executives who offered a blueprint for changing the way schools, business, and government prepare workers for an increasingly complex economy. The Commission stated, "Most workers receive no education or training beyond high school, and they will see their dreams slip away unless society invests far more in improving their skills in school and on the job."

PASSAGE, the Pennsylvania Department of Education's workplace and job skills information newsletter, asked its readers to give their opinions on selected workplace literacy topics. In January, 1990, a Workplace Literacy Survey (see insert) was distributed to twenty-two hundred (2200) readers on PASSAGE's mailing list. The survey, a statewide initiative, and the Commission on the Skills of the American Work Force, a national project, explored a few of the same issues and, not surprisingly, drew similar conclusions in those areas.

Most interesting were the Commission's recommendations that companies devote at least one percent (1%) of their payroll to skills training and mandate that no one under eighteen be allowed to hold a job until proving mastery of basic academic skills and work qualities. In support of the latter recommendation, seventy-eight percent (78%) of PASSAGE's Workplace Literacy Survey respondents felt there was a link between a worker's basic skills (reading, writing, and math) and his/her job performance; ninety-five percent (95%) of the respondents saw the need for company-sponsored education/training programs (survey question number two, percentage total for number of responses to choices A and B).

The Midland Center, Inc., publisher of PASSAGE, is pleased with the two hundred eighty-six (286) survey respondents, representing twenty-four geographical areas (see accompanying sidebar), who took the time from their busy schedules to share their thoughts with us. We hope to continue our workplace literacy research in 1990-1991 as new opportunities develop for exchanging ideas, gathering data, and highlighting innovative programs. It has been an exciting year for us, and we thank you for PASSAGE's warm reception throughout the Commonwealth.

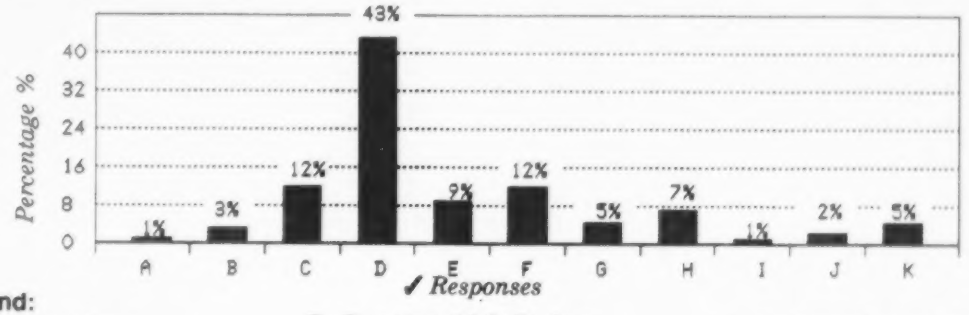
To learn more about the results of PASSAGE's Workplace Literacy Survey, the enclosed documentation and graphs are provided for your analysis, interpretation, and information.

Sincerely,

The Editorial Staff

Respondent Personal Profiles

Initially, the workplace literacy survey asked respondents to select the appropriate personal profile description along with a secondary choice should they feel another description applied to them. The following graph represents those findings.



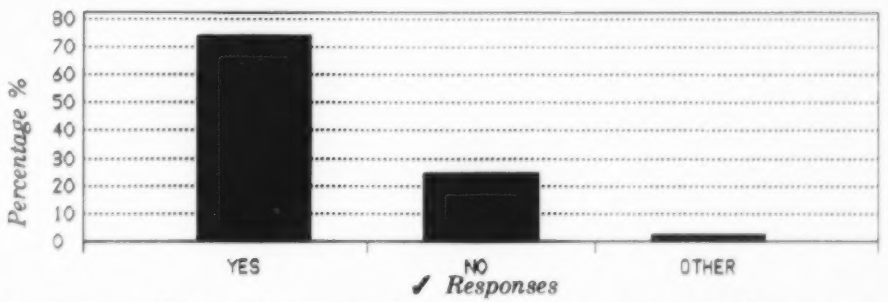
Legend:

A. Business Owner
B. Business Manager
C. Part-time Employee
D. Full-time Employee
E. Part-time Adult Student
F. Full-time Adult Student
G. Adult Education Administrator
H. Adult Education Teacher
I. Guidance Counselor
J. Volunteer Tutor
K. Other

■ The graph illustrates the largest group of respondents was full-time employees (43%). It is worth noting that after further compilations, thirty-two percent (32%) of the full-time employees were also students attending classes on a full-time or part-time basis.

Evaluating Potential Employee Academic Skill Levels

Question One asked respondents "Should employers evaluate a job candidate's math, reading, and writing abilities as they relate to the job?" The second graph illustrates the information received on the issue of companies evaluating the academic skill levels of potential employees.



■ Seventy-four percent (74%) of the respondents to survey question number one answered "yes." Twenty-four percent (24%) answered "no." The remaining two percent (2%) marked the "other" category and stated "it depends on the job."

Worker Education Responsibilities

Question Two on the survey asked, "Should companies offer job-related reading, writing, or math skills training to existing employees who have a need for or interest in these skills?" The respondents were requested to choose one of the following responses:

A. Yes, through company-sponsored programs at the worksite on company and/or worker's own time.
B. Yes, through company-sponsored tuition reimbursement plans (company pays all or some of the costs) that permit employees to enroll in job-related courses.
C. No, employees should accept the responsibility and cost for their own training and education.
D. Other

STUDENTaccesspage

WORKPLACE LITERACY SURVEY

The Midland Center, Inc. and its Volunteers In Service To America (VISTA) Literacy Corps need your help. We are interested in your opinions on the topic of Workplace Literacy. We thank you for answering the following questions!

DIRECTIONS: Place a number one (1) next to the description that best describes you. If another category also describes you, place a number two (2) in front of that description. Please do not number further.

____ Business Owner
____ Business Manager
____ Part-time Employee
____ Full-time Employee
____ Part-time Adult Student
____ Full-time Adult Student
____ Adult Education Administrator
____ Adult Education Teacher
____ Guidance Counselor
____ Volunteer Tutor
____ Other(Explain:_____
_____)

QUESTIONS 1-3 (CHECK ONE RESPONSE)

1. SHOULD EMPLOYERS EVALUATE A JOB CANDIDATE'S MATH, READING, AND WRITING ABILITIES AS THEY RELATE TO THE JOB?

A._____ YES! Employers should have knowledge about a potential employee's job-related reading, writing, and math skills.

B._____ NO! Potential employees with the proper job qualifications, references, and education/work history have already demonstrated their ability to read, write, and calculate.

C._____OTHER(List:_____
_____
_____)

2. SHOULD COMPANIES OFFER JOB-RELATED READING, WRITING, OR MATH SKILLS TRAINING TO EXISTING EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE A NEED FOR OR INTEREST IN THESE SKILLS?

A._____ YES! Through company-sponsored education/training programs at the worksite on company and/or worker's own time.

B._____ YES! Through company-sponsored tuition reimbursement plans (company pays all or some of the costs) that permit employees to enroll in job-related courses.

C._____ NO! Employees should accept the responsibility and cost for their own training and education.

D._____OTHER(List:_____
_____
_____)

3. IS THERE A LINK BETWEEN A WORKER'S BASIC SKILLS (READING, WRITING, AND MATH) AND HIS/HER JOB PERFORMANCE?

A._____ YES! Workers who acquire basic academic skills are more likely to perform well on the job.

B._____ NO! Workers who lack basic academic skills are just as likely to perform well on the job.

C._____OTHER(List:_____
_____
_____)

4. WHY DON'T COMPANIES INVEST IN BASIC SKILLS PROGRAMS IN READING/WRITING/MATH?

(RANK: 1=MOST IMPORTANT to 5=LEAST IMPORTANT)

_____ Because a lack of information exists on workplace basic skills programs.

_____ Because employers view the "workplace literacy" problem as the latest fad, and they are not convinced that job-related basic education programs make a difference in the workplace.

_____ Because scheduling difficulties and time and cost factors are considerable and outweigh the benefits of offering such training programs.

_____ Because worker interest and commitment are not always guaranteed. Employees may find these programs to be threatening to their jobs, as well as a source of embarrassment to them.

_____ Because employers do not feel that the current workforce lacks the basic skills.

5. WHY DO COMPANIES INVEST IN JOB-RELATED READING, MATH, AND WRITING INSTRUCTION FOR EMPLOYEES?

(RANK: 1=MOST IMPORTANT to 3=LEAST IMPORTANT)

_____ Health and safety issues are becoming more important because of changes in company, state, and federal regulations. Companies need employees to understand written/verbal communications which affect their health and safety on the job.

_____ Employees can become more prepared to work towards improvements in productivity, quality, competitiveness, performance, and labor-management cooperation by enrolling in basic skills programs.

_____ Companies can better prepare workers for rapid changes in technology in the workplace by offering basic skills programs.

6. WHAT ASSURANCES WOULD EMPLOYERS NEED TO HAVE BEFORE THEY OFFERED A WORKPLACE LITERACY PROGRAM?

(RANK FACTORS 1 THROUGH 8 THAT ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN SETTING UP A PROGRAM WITH 1=MOST IMPORTANT to 8=LEAST IMPORTANT.)

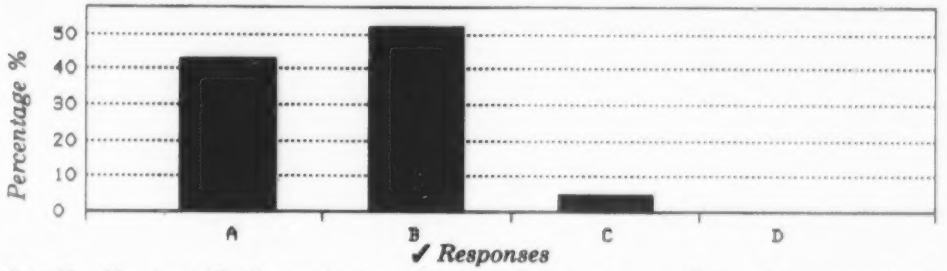
_____ Manageable cost and time factors
_____ Management's support of the program
_____ Relevance to the job/s
_____ Labor's support of the program
_____ Management and labor input in the design of program
_____ Instruction offered by current employees
_____ Confidentiality for the participants
_____ Instruction offered by outside consultants

7. WHAT ASSURANCES WOULD EMPLOYEES NEED TO HAVE BEFORE THEY PARTICIPATED IN A WORKPLACE LITERACY PROGRAM?

(RANK FACTORS 1 THROUGH 8 THAT ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN SETTING UP A PROGRAM WITH 1=MOST IMPORTANT to 8=LEAST IMPORTANT.)

_____ Manageable cost and time factors
_____ Management's support of the program
_____ Relevance to the job/s
_____ Labor's support of the program
_____ Management and labor input in the design of program
_____ Instruction offered by current employees
_____ Confidentiality for the participants
_____ Instruction offered by outside consultants

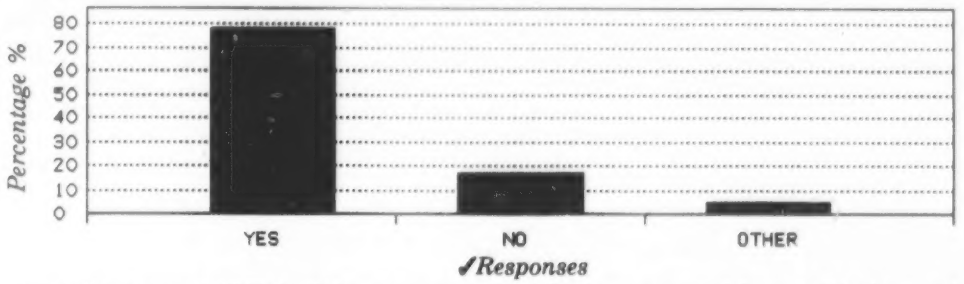
Thank you for completing this survey!



■ As graphically illustrated, the majority of respondents answered "yes" in support of either company-sponsored worksite education programs (choice A - 43%)or company-sponsored tuition reimbursement plans (choice B - 52%). The remaining five percent (5%) responded with choice C.

Basic Skills And Job Performance

Survey question Number Three asked "Is there a link between a worker's basic skills (Reading, Writing, and Math) and his/her job performance?" The respondents had three choices to select from--yes, no, and other. The last graph depicts the results.



■ Seventy-eight percent (78%) of the survey respondents answered "yes." Workers who acquire basic academic skills are more likely to perform well on the job. Seventeen percent (17%) responded "no." Workers who lack the basic skills are just as likely to perform well on the job. Five percent (5%) responded to the "other" category and wrote in that "it depends on the job."

Workplace Literacy Investments

PASSAGE's Workplace Literacy Survey Questions Four and Five asked its respondents why companies do or do not invest in basic skills programs for their employees. The format for these questions changed from selecting one answer to ranking the provided answers in order of importance.

4. Why Don't Companies Invest in Basic Skills Programs in Reading/writing/math?

(Rank: 1=most important to 5=least important)

__3__ Because a lack of information exists on workplace basic skills programs.

__5__ Because employers view the "workplace literacy" problem as the latest fad, and they are not convinced that job-related basic education programs make a difference in the workplace.

__1__ Because scheduling difficulties and time and cost factors are considerable and outweigh the benefits of offering such training programs.

__2__ Because worker interest and commitment are not always guaranteed. Employees may find these programs to be threatening to their jobs, as well as a source of embarrassment to them.

__4__ Because employers do not feel that the current work force lacks the basic skills.

5. Why Do Companies Invest in Job-related Reading, Math, And Writing Instruction For Employees?

(Rank: 1=most important to 3=least important)

__3__ Health and safety issues are becoming more important because of changes in company, state, and federal regulations. Companies need employees to understand written/verbal communications which affect their health and safety on the job.

__1__ Employees can become more prepared to work towards improvements in productivity, quality, competitiveness, performance, and labor-management cooperation by enrolling in basic skills programs.

__2__ Companies can better prepare workers for rapid changes in technology in the workplace by offering basic skills programs.

■ The respondents felt that companies are concerned with scheduling difficulties and time and cost factors; in addition, the respondents felt the least important reason why companies do not invest in basic skills was because employers view the workplace literacy problem as a fad.

Productivity, quality, competitiveness, performance, and labor-management cooperation (question number five) were overwhelmingly selected as reasons why companies do invest in job-related reading, math, and writing instructions for employees. Next, respondents felt that companies can better prepare workers for rapid changes in technology by offering basic skills programs. Health and safety issues were ranked third in order of importance.

Employer-Employee Assurances

Employers need to have certain assurances before they offer workplace literacy programs. Employees need to have assurances before they participate in these programs. The respondents were asked to rank in order of importance how they felt employers and employees would view the following assurances.

6. What Assurances Would Employers Need To Have Before They Offered A Workplace Literacy Program?

(Rank factors 1 through 8 that are most important in setting up a program with 1=most important to 8=least important.)

1 Manageable cost and time factors
2 Management's support of the program
6 Relevance to the job/s
4 Labor's support of the program
3 Management's and labor's input in the design of program
7 Instruction offered by current employees
5 Confidentiality for the participants
8 Instruction offered by outside consultants

7. What Assurances Would Employees Need To Have Before They Participated In A Workplace Literacy Program?

(Rank factors 1 through 8 that are most important in setting up a program with 1=most important to 8=least important.)

7 Manageable cost and time factors
3 Management's support of the program
2 Relevance to the job/s
4 Labor's support of the program
5 Management's and labor's input in the design of program
6 Instruction offered by current employees
1 Confidentiality for the participants
8 Instruction offered by outside consultants

■ The results to Question Number Six illustrated that the respondents felt employers view manageable costs and time factors as important assurances to consider before offering a workplace literacy program. Least important to employers, in the view of the respondents, was an assurance that instruction be offered to the employees by outside consultants.

The rank order, according to the respondents, for Question Number Seven revealed employees would be primarily concerned with confidentiality for the participants in a workplace literacy program; interestingly, the respondents continued to select "instruction offered by outside consultants" as the least important assurance.

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